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ABSTRACT

Hawaii's School/Community-Based Management Initiative (SCBM), which was enacted into law in 1989, is part of a national trend toward decentralizing decision making and increasing school autonomy that arose during the 1980s. A voluntary program, SCBM offers schools flexibility, autonomy, and a small amount of resources in exchange for school-community commitment and plans for improving educational outcomes. This document presents findings of an evaluation of the first nine schools that participated in SCBM. Data were derived from individual and focus-group interviews with each of the six role groups and SCBM council members; observation; surveys of teachers, support staff, SCBM council members, administrators, and parents; and document analysis. The evaluation shows that SCBM participation has brought greater voice to many groups, fostered new ways of collaboration, and (in a few cases) led to the development of a school culture that supports significant improvement in the learning environment. In short, SCBM rarely has caused school improvement but has provided the framework and vehicle for improvement. The following recommendations are offered: (1) All levels need to consider ways to continue building group decision making and communication skills; (2) schools need to determine and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the council from the start; (3) participants at all levels, but especially in schools, need to develop better procedures for orienting new SCBM council members--particularly staff and parents--to SCBM and the school's vision; (4) the state needs to streamline and clarify the waiver and exception process; (5) schools and the state should consider adopting accountability systems capable of meeting both school and state needs; (6) all levels should consider streamlining school-improvement goals, designing staff-development plans, and instituting a comprehensive planning process; and (7) greater cooperation, coordination of effort, and creative use of resources are needed to provide SCBM schools with support in this time of diminishing resources. Six figures and 13 tables are included. (Contains 21 references.) (LMI)

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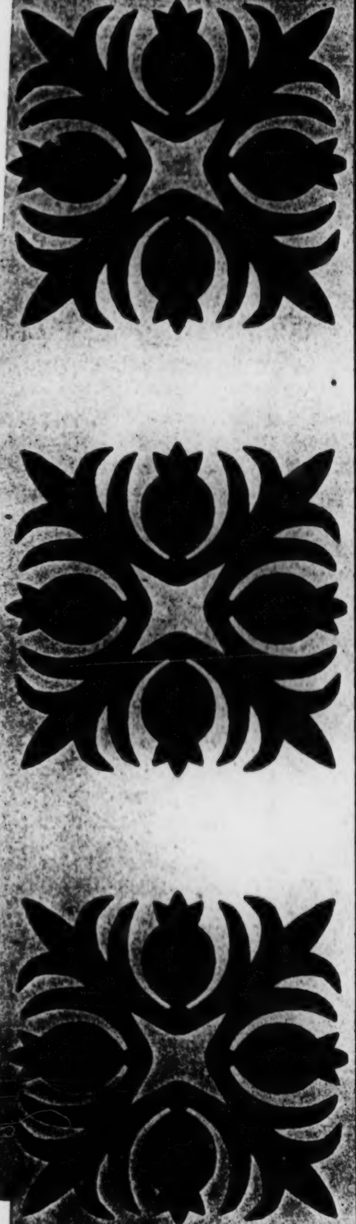

Voice, Collaboration and School Culture

Creating a Community for School Improvement

Evaluation of the Pioneer SCBM Schools

Hawaii's School/Community-Based Management Initiative

EA 027 732

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Voice, Collaboration and School Culture

Creating a Community for School Improvement

Evaluation of the Pioneer SCBM Schools
Hawaii's School/Community-Based Management Initiative

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1. *Introduction*

SCBM: AN EXPERIMENT IN DECISION-MAKING AND AUTONOMY

Hawaii's School/Community-Based Management (SCBM) initiative is part of a national trend toward decentralizing decision-making and increasing school autonomy that arose in response to growing disenchantment with state mandates, process regulations and other top-down policy mechanisms during the early 1980s. Most site- or school-based management initiatives and models shift decision-making authority to the school level as a means of stimulating school improvement (David, 1989; Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1994). By situating decision-making closer to schools and involving the broader school-community, it is believed individuals will feel empowered to introduce innovations, schools will gain broader commitment and support from their communities and staffs, and changes will be tailored to the unique and diverse needs of local communities.

Enacted into law in June 1989, SCBM is similar to other school-based management initiatives in two major respects. First, it is designed to delegate decision-making authority among all segments of the school's community — principals, teachers, support staff, parents, students and other community members. Second, it increases school autonomy and flexibility by offering schools greater budgetary control and the opportunity to relax or waive constraining policies, rules and regulations.

But in many respects, SCBM is also about systemic reform. It aims to alter traditional roles and relationships of key participants in delivering — or supporting the delivery of — education. For example, the task force on SCBM expected one outcome of shared decision-making to be "newly evolving roles of the school, the community, the Department of Education, and the Board of Education" (Final Report, pg. 5). Many of the modifications individual SCBM schools requested — including lump sum budgeting and more flexibility on how certain staff positions are used — became standard for all SCBM schools, and later, for all schools in Hawaii via legislation or changes in board and department policies. SCBM is also systemic in its effort to build and support communities. Specifically, it engenders a revitalization of community spirit and resources (including partnerships with businesses and communities) that should "transform the school and the community into dynamic centers of life-long learning" (Final Report, pg. 4).

A voluntary program, SCBM offers schools flexibility and autonomy and a small amount of resources in exchange for school-community commitment and plans for improving educational outcomes. Schools interested in being included were asked to submit a letter of intent that expressed support from all segments of the school community — principals, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members. Participants received a $2,000 planning grant when their letters were approved.[1] Schools were asked to develop a proposal to implement that included: 1) a current school improvement plan (required by districts), 2) discussion of possible implementation problems and solutions, 3) lists of rules or regulations they felt needed to be waived, 4) any staff development or training they felt was necessary to implement their plans and 5) a description of the shared decision-making model to be established at their school. Upon approval, schools received $9,000 implementation grants.

Ten schools agreed to participate in the first year. Moving into the sixth year, 196 schools in the state have now embraced SCBM, and 124 of these are ready to implement SCBM proposals or have already begun implementation.

Far West Laboratory was contracted by the Hawaii Department of Education to conduct an evaluation of the first nine SCBM schools. Now in either their fifth or sixth year of implementation, these early schools are the pioneers of SCBM. This report focuses on the collective accomplishments and impact of SCBM thus far at the nine initial sites. Specifically, the report reviews the:

- Evaluation framework and methods;
- Goals and expected outcomes of SCBM;
- Impact of SCBM on school decision-making and management;
- Impact of SCBM on school-community connections;
- Impact of SCBM on school improvement;
- Impact of SCBM on individual outcomes: parents, teachers and students; and
- Conclusion and recommendations.

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[1] Since these schools began SCBM, many of the rules and procedures guiding it have been revised. For example, since April 1991, the participation process has been simplified to provide schools $11,000 on approval of the letter of intent.

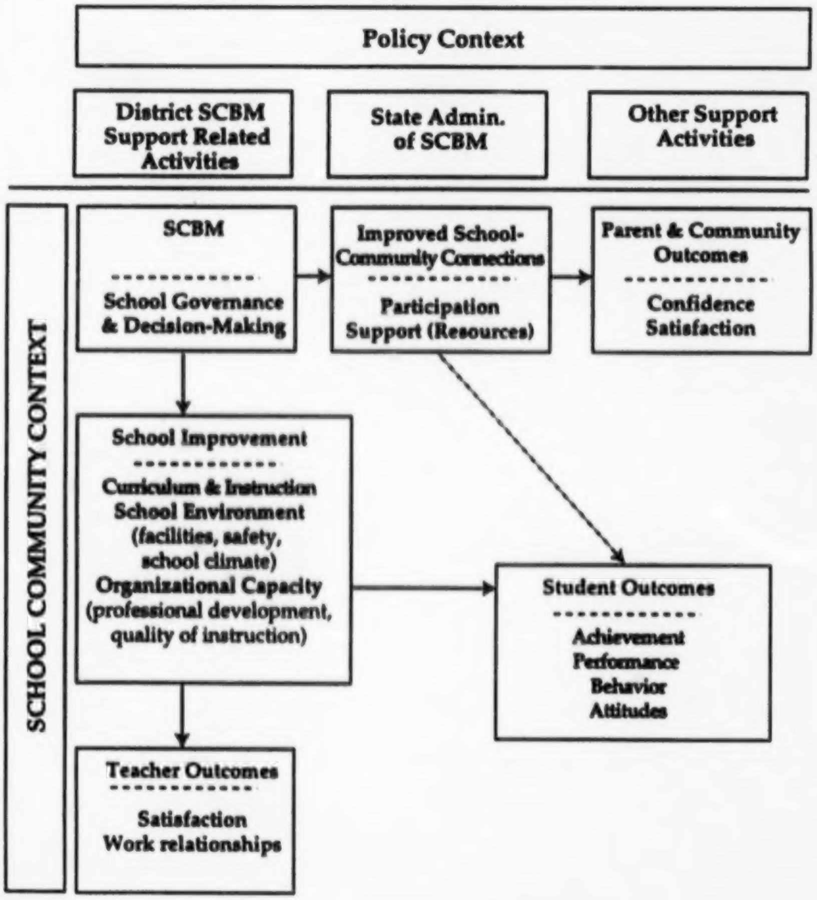
2. Evaluation Framework and Methods

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual frameworks or "theories of action" (Patton, 1978) help focus evaluation resources and attention on key areas and issues of a program or policy initiative. To evaluate SCBM, we developed a framework that builds on the "theory" and assumptions underlying school-based management initiatives generally, and SCBM, specifically. Stated simply, the idea behind site-based management is that by bringing decision-making to the school level and involving all stakeholders in the process, better educational outcomes and, ultimately, improved students outcomes, will result.

Based on SCBM theory, certain outcomes and impacts can be anticipated (see Figure 1). Apart from establishing a school governance and decision-making structure, SCBM is expected to improve educa-

Figure 1
SCBM Evaluation Conceptual Framework


Policy Context
District SCBM Support Related Activities
State Admin. of SCBM
Other Support Activities
SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONTEXT
SCBM
School Governance & Decision-Making
Improved School-Community Connections
Participation
Support (Resources)
Parent & Community Outcomes
Confidence
Satisfaction
School Improvement
Curriculum & Instruction
School Environment (facilities, safety, school climate)
Organizational Capacity (professional development, quality of instruction)
Student Outcomes
Achievement
Performance
Behavior
Attitudes
Teacher Outcomes
Satisfaction
Work relationships

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tional outcomes in two principal areas: school improvement and school-community connections. By enabling those closest to the point of implementation to generate change, SCBM is expected to stimulate improvement in curriculum and instruction as well as school environment. In turn, these modifications and innovations should lead to improved teacher outcomes, such as enhanced instructional skills and satisfaction. Likewise, increased parent and community involvement in decision-making is expected to improve school-community relations and build more support in schools, eventually increasing parental confidence and satisfaction.

The long-term aim of SCBM is to improve student learning and performance. Enhancements in the school learning environment — physical, social and academic — are expected to affect student learning. Likewise, parents and community need to provide support and opportunities for students to better their attitudes, behavior, performance and, ultimately, academic success in school.

The framework we developed illustrates two key points. First, improving student outcomes is a significant venture. A number of changes need to occur before we can expect heightened student outcomes. For example, improvements in curriculum and instruction are a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for altering student learning. Equally important, progress in learning is a result of the combined efforts of the entire community. Parents, community organizations, and local businesses — not schools alone — need to create an environment that fosters the development of Hawaii's youth. As the African proverb advises, "It takes a whole village to raise a child."

The second important concept recognized in the framework is that differing conditions in the school-community context can affect how SCBM is implemented and its results. Variations in student and community demographics or the stability of leadership are examples of factors known to affect school improvement and restructuring efforts (Izu, 1988; Conley, 1993). Therefore, we looked at aspects of the school-community context to interpret particular implementation patterns or impacts. State and district administration and support also have an impact on SCBM at the school level. Consequently, we examined state and district efforts to provide technical assistance to SCBM schools.

SCBM CONTEXT AND EVALUATION CHALLENGES

Even with a framework to guide us, evaluating the impact of SCBM was complicated for several reasons. Three features of the broader state context made SCBM evaluation particularly challenging and created implications for our design.

1. SCBM is one of several evolving state initiatives aimed at systemic reform of Hawaii's public education system. It is the initial component in the state of Hawaii's effort to restructure and decentralize the public education system. Project Ke Au Hou, initiated by Superintendent Toguchi in 1990, is another piece of the effort to decentralize the school system. It reflected a recognition of the need to reorganize state and district offices to support a school-community approach to improving public education.

Since SCBM was enacted in 1989, it has triggered further reforms. For instance, in 1991 modifications to the implementation guidelines simplified the participation process, and the superintendent initiated new budget flexibility for SCBM schools. Both efforts provided additional incentives for school involvement. In 1992, legislation was enacted authorizing lump sum budgeting flexibility. By 1993, an education Omnibus Bill (HB 2156) afforded schools and Department of Education offices greater flexibility in departmental operations, such as allowing school-initiated proposals for a modified calendar that would extend the school year beyond June. Legislation in 1994 created charter or student-centered schools and further deregulated Hawaii's schools. Recent law recodifies the educational statutes and sets the stage for a more streamlined and coherent policy environment that supports school-based systemic reform.

At the same time, other state initiatives are aimed at restructuring schools. Long before SCBM, districts required schools to create school improvement plans that would articulate classroom and grade level curriculum and instructional efforts more coherently within a school. In 1994, the Hawaii State Commission on Performance Standards outlined in its report the performance standards expected of all students in Hawaii's public schools. Most recently, Superintendent Aizawa introduced the Success Compact — a comprehensive literacy-focused program designed to enhance school quality.

SCBM is being implemented in a rich and dynamic reform context. This environment creates a twofold impact on the evaluation design. First, because the SCBM initiative continues to change and new policies related to decentralization emerge, the extent of school autonomy differs for schools depending upon when they utilize the waiver and exception process. As a result, comparisons of these nine pioneering schools to other SCBM or Hawaii schools are inappropriate. Our analysis, therefore, utilizes these nine schools' goals and expectations as primary criteria for evaluating SCBM's success (discussed in the following section).

The second impact of the reform context on SCBM is that its effects are compounded by the other initiatives in which schools are concurrently engaged. A qualitative approach focused on process as well as outcomes helped us to isolate the unique effects of SCBM and identify other reforms or conditions that complemented or inhibited its effectiveness.

2. ***SCBM mandates a conceptual framework, not a specific model of implementation.*** Based on the belief that locally executed change can best accommodate diversity and needs at the local level, SCBM was not meant to be prescriptive or uniformly applied across all schools. Instead, specific improvement goals and outcomes were left to the discretion of schools, and the Department of Education's role was envisioned as supporting their efforts. The implication for design was that we needed to analyze the extent to which general guidelines were met and then examine various patterns, modes of improvement and conditions under which SCBM assisted schools in reaching their anticipated outcomes. It was also essential to examine the support and assistance offered at other levels of the state system so that feedback and recommendations could be provided to these agencies.

3. ***Initial SCBM guidelines did not specifically focus on student learning outcomes.*** While early literature suggested SCBM should be related to school improvement, it did not directly address the need to focus on student learning or outcomes. At first, evidence indicated curriculum and instructional reform were not necessarily the immediate or primary focus of SCBM. The evaluation, therefore, needed not only to examine the extent and quality of improvements undertaken by schools, but to look broadly at characteristics of schools that successfully met their goals.

Methodological Approach

Both the framework and context for the evaluation influenced the study design. In order to capture the unique experiences and circumstances at each school, our approach consisted of two phases. First, we examined the implementation of SCBM and its impact on each school and developed individual school reports. Second, we analyzed themes and trends related to impacts, challenges and issues across these first nine schools. Key design features are highlighted and briefly described below.

A qualitative, ethnographically-oriented approach. To evaluate the impact of SCBM in relation to each school's goals, we employed a case study approach, carefully examining how SCBM was viewed and implemented at each school. Because of the uniqueness of each school-community, we needed the rich, in-depth information that a case approach allows. We made two-day visits to each school during February and March 1995, to conduct individual and focus group interviews with each of the six role groups and SCBM council members. In addition, we observed classrooms and, when feasible, observed SCBM council meetings and other special school events.

Although we wanted to capture the efforts and circumstances of individual schools, we wanted to ensure the data we collected was comparable across schools. This was facilitated in several ways. First, we developed and refined a set of research questions — using the conceptual framework as a guide — and identified sources to answer these questions. Second, based on the research questions for each of the six major role groups, we designed interview guides. A standard classroom observation tool was also created (see appendix). Next, we conducted a series of training and debriefing sessions to guarantee our researchers shared a common understanding. Finally, to ensure the individual school reports contained comparable information, our staff followed the same outline to analyze and write the reports.

Evidence-driven analysis. This evaluation is built on an array of quantitative and qualitative data from schools. In addition to conducting interviews and classroom observations, we administered on-site surveys to teachers, support staff, SCBM council members and administrators. We also conducted a parent survey. SCBM proposals and council minutes were gathered. Schools were asked to provide any information that might indicate evidence of SCBM impacts. This data included school-designed surveys and evaluations, Parent-Community Networking Center volunteer logs, information on geographic exceptions and proposals for blue ribbon schools. Finally, we examined a myriad of data from state department sources for all schools, such as the School Status and Improvement Reports, Effective Schools Survey, standardized test score data for students and records on school requests for waivers and exceptions (see appendix). In short, to develop a complete picture of the role and impact of SCBM, we compiled and integrated all available evidence on the expected areas of impact.

Common themes across these "pioneer" schools. For this report, we analyzed the data summarized in our individual school reports (and other data available on these schools) for similar themes within each area of impact suggested by the evaluation framework. By understanding the context in which change occurred in these nine schools, we can better understand how SCBM will work in other settings. Although some richness is lost by aggregating findings, this analysis provides an overview of how well these early schools conformed to the theory of SCBM. Our report on SCBM's first nine schools is also about the pioneers — schools that set precedents and influenced policy for SCBM schools that followed and, eventually, for all SCBM schools.

Congruency with SCBM philosophy and approach. Finally, our approach to this evaluation can be described as collaborative. Orientation visits in October were designed to obtain input for the evaluation and to update information. Building upon the Department of Education Evaluation Section's earlier survey on expected outcomes, we asked schools to update this information and suggest which data we should look at and to whom we should talk. In designing parent surveys, we obtained schools' ideas on what to include and how best to conduct them. Where feasible, we tailored the survey to school needs, and designed the individual school reports to provide each school with lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

More information on data sources and the instruments used in this study can be found in the appendix.

3. Goals and Expected Outcomes of SCBM

Since SCBM is implemented in a context rich with many concurrent reforms, it is not surprising that separating SCBM goals and expected outcomes from other reforms is a challenge. In fact, one characteristic of "success" and the longevity of an innovation is its ability to become institutionalized and part of regular school routines (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). In order to assess the overall success of SCBM, we needed to first take a look at how well these schools were able to meet their original SCBM goals (as the original request for proposals for this evaluation required), then examine commonalties among the nine schools and see how well these fit with the theory of SCBM.

Focusing our analysis and findings on shared goals and expected outcomes is a way to strike a balance between the unique efforts of individual schools and the broader overview of the initiative's impacts needed at a policy level. In this section, we examine the goals and expected outcomes of schools and try to reconcile this with our framework for evaluating SCBM's impact.

SCBM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN GOALS: WHERE DOES ONE BEGIN AND THE OTHER LEAVE OFF?

One of the major challenges we faced was identifying each school's SCBM goals. Establishing a shared decision-making process is an obvious goal for all nine schools. However, identifying other specific goals for SCBM that are separate from goals for other reforms — and particularly school improvement plan goals — is difficult for three reasons.

1. ***SCBM and school improvement plan goals were not necessarily well-connected.*** In many of the early efforts of these schools, we found goals for SCBM and school improvement were sometimes separate, and occasionally different. School mission or vision statements in the early stages were often vague and loosely coupled to existing goals contained in school improvement plans. This is to be expected and reflects both the motivation to embark on a new direction within a framework and the difficulty in doing so when other models and programs for school improvement are already in place.

Schools were required to submit school improvement plans (required by their districts) with their SCBM proposals. Depending upon where a school was in its three-year school improvement planning cycle, plans differed in how well they were integrated with SCBM proposals. Some schools simply attached their plans without referencing or integrating them into the SCBM efforts previously described. When timing was appropriate, other schools merged the revision of school improvement plans with the planning required for SCBM.

2. *Goals change over time.* Goals that changed over time represented a second major challenge. Again, this is to be expected and, in some instances, is an indicator of school adaptability. Some schools chose to merge and integrate SCBM and school improvement planning; others decided to keep them separate, later seeking SCBM council input or approval. Equally important, many schools revised or changed their goals; not only because a goal was met, but due to changes in leadership or staff, and sometimes, due to student input.

3. *School improvement plan formats vary.* The vast differences in formats and approaches to school improvement plans sometimes made it difficult to determine school goals. In some districts, yearly action plans were required, while in others only three-year plans need to be submitted. School improvement plans that used a discrepancy approach to goals (for example, 70 percent of the students in the lowest quartile will make a 10 percent gain in...) sometimes ran counter to the new directions schools had embarked upon in curriculum and instruction design. Large numbers of goals and objectives (one plan we read included nearly 70) made it difficult to discern key activities schools focused on at any given point in time. At one school, even teachers found the school improvement plan cumbersome and difficult to follow — making the integration of school improvement and SCBM goals a challenge for the SCBM council as well as our project staff.

In short, we found it difficult to isolate and clearly specify the original goals for SCBM as separate from school improvement goals. In the few schools where we could isolate SCBM efforts from other school improvement activities, certain activities stood out as SCBM-related because they were associated with the many wavier and exception requests that the schools filed. To evaluate schools' progress against their own SCBM goals for the initiative as a whole, we needed a measure of commonly expected goals and outcomes. Therefore, in addition to a qualitative summary of the goals listed in SCBM proposals and school improvement plans (see section on school improvement), we examined two additional data sources: information on improvement priorities contained in the School Status and Improvement Reports and a survey conducted on the expected outcomes of SCBM by the department's evaluation section (updated during our orientation visits).

WHAT ARE THE IMPROVEMENT GOALS FOR SCHOOLS?

We used the school improvement priorities contained in the School Status and Improvement Reports for the years 1990–91 through 1993–94 as one indicator of improvement goals.[2] Since 1990–91, schools have been asked to select and rank order their top three priority areas for improvement from a list of ten possible priority areas.[3] We found the ratings and narrative summaries of school improvement priorities listed in these reports to be the most succinct summary of school improvement goals available for all schools. These ratings and descriptions are fairly robust — that is, consistent with information we gathered during orientation and site visits — and though less rich and detailed, consistent with SCBM proposals.

Examining this data over four years, we found several common improvement themes in the priorities schools chose. All nine schools list some ***curricular and instructional activities*** as an improvement priority, though some schools classified these innovations under the category of student achievement instead of school curriculum (as evidenced in the narratives that follow the ratings). ***Staff development*** is listed as a priority in six schools. Of note, four of these schools (or about half of this sample) maintained a consistent focus on staff development over the four-year period.

SCBM was also an improvement priority for slightly more than half of the schools. The ***SCBM*** category is listed as a priority in five schools, though most schools focused on this priority in the early, rather than later, years. A closer analysis of these priorities against the anecdotal evidence we gained from site visits suggests that those schools which rated SCBM as a priority in the early years only interpreted SCBM as establishing a *shared decision-making process*. Other schools that consistently rated SCBM as a priority associated this category with *building parent and community involvement*. Thus, while only a few schools selected the ***parent involvement*** category, our evidence suggests that, in practice, many schools viewed improving parent and community connections as a priority.

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[2] Using information from School Status and Improvement Reports is attractive because it is data that is available for all public schools and can, therefore, be utilized in future evaluations.

[3] Improvement priority categories listed in school status and improvement reports include: 1) student achievement, 2) student behavior, 3) student attitude, 4) school curriculum, 5) staff development, 6) campus facilities and appearance, 7) parent involvement/community relations, 8) SCBM, 9) school support services and 10) school curriculum/instruction/assessment. Schools are asked to select the three areas that were the focus of their efforts during a given year, and to rank order their choices.

Several other improvements are cited as priorities by schools. ***Student attitudes*** is a common and consistent priority for three schools. Other priorities mentioned by individual schools include campus facilities, physical fitness and technology.

WHAT SCBM OUTCOMES DO SCHOOLS EXPECT?

Expected outcomes of SCBM do differ from school improvement goals. The results from a survey conducted by the evaluation section last year were used as the basis for a measure of expected outcomes of SCBM among these nine schools. In preparation for the summative evaluation, the department's evaluation section conducted a survey to gather information on what schools and other role groups felt the evaluation should encompass. The survey included a question about expected SCBM outcomes for parents/community, teachers and students. Six of the first nine schools were included in this survey. During our orientation visits, we updated this information and coded it using the ten categories employed in the department's report of results.[4]

The evidence suggests schools clearly connect SCBM to the school-decision making process, empowerment and participation. Eight schools mentioned ***shared decision-making*** as an expected outcome, and at most schools, it was among the three most frequently cited outcomes. Similarly, ***autonomy and a sense of empowerment*** was mentioned by six schools, and was among the most frequently mentioned responses at three schools. However, ***improved participation*** — especially of parents and the community — was a clear expected outcome of all nine schools and was among the three most frequently listed expected outcomes at every school.

Other commonly expected outcomes were associated with the climate and culture of school. Five schools reported satisfaction with SCBM and ***school climate*** as expected outcomes, while about a third of the schools expected to see changes ***in attitude toward***

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[4] These categories include: 1) autonomy/sense of empowerment, 2) academic achievement, 3) attitudes toward school and learning, 4) budgeting; cost benefit considerations, 5) instructional innovations, 6) participation, 7) student behavior, 8) shared decision-making, 9) satisfaction with SCBM and school climate, and 10) school vision outcomes.

school and learning. Finally, ***academic achievement*** (four schools) and ***instructional innovations*** (three schools) were among the expected outcomes of some schools, though they were mentioned less frequently.

The surveys and our update also asked schools about "acceptable evidence that SCBM has been successful at your school." Interestingly, at least half of the schools listed improved student learning and higher test scores and performance as acceptable evidence. However, these were not necessarily schools that cited instructional innovation or academic achievement as expected outcomes of SCBM. This is consistent with the department's report on this survey data that noted respondents ***did not*** necessarily link responses to the question on expected outcomes with the acceptable evidence for success.

"SCBM is a commitment to restructuring; it's restructuring from the bottom-up that should eventually permeate the entire system"

— Department of Education staff member

HOW CLOSELY DO SCHOOLS' GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS CORRESPOND TO THOSE OF POLICY-MAKERS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS?

We interviewed state policy-makers as well as technical assistance providers at the state and district levels about the expected goals and outcomes of SCBM. For the most part, the expectations of people in these roles at these different levels corresponded with those of schools. Like schools, all of those we interviewed expected to see ***shared decision-making*** and ***stronger parental and community participation and involvement*** as a result of SCBM. Most people also expected to see changes in school climate and, eventually, student learning and performance. However, people varied considerably in the length of time they felt was necessary before they could expect to see changes in students.

One area in which expected outcomes differed for people at the state level compared to those at the school level was in expectations for systemic reform. Some technical assistance providers as well as many policy-makers expected to eventually see changes in the larger public education system — in the roles of the department, board and unions as well as the community at-large. Several people also noted that expected outcomes of SCBM changed over time. One department staff's comments captures both these points:

> *We saw SCBM narrowly as participatory management and empowering people at the school level. Now, through the process, it's clear that the entire system needs to be restructured, including the district and state levels.*

DO OUTCOMES CORRESPOND TO THE THEORY OF SCBM?

In summary, the goals and expectations cited by the nine participating schools were fairly consistent with the model of SCBM, especially as it was originally proposed. In Table 1 the data on *common* expected outcomes for SCBM and school improvement goals across the nine schools is summarized. Goals or outcomes that were mentioned by more than half of the schools appear highlighted in Table 1. Those that were mentioned by eight or nine schools are denoted by an asterisk.

Table 1
Summary of Common Outcomes and Goals of SCBM

Expected SCBM Outcomes	School Improvement Goals
• Instructional innovation	• **Curriculum and instruction**
• Academic achievement	• **Staff development**
	• **Student achievement**
• **Shared decision-making process***	• **SCBM** — shared decision-making and improved parent and community participation
• **Improved participation ***	
• **Autonomy and empowerment**	
• **Attitudes toward school and learning**	• Student attitudes
• **Satisfaction with SCBM and school climate**	

As the table indicates, these first nine schools make a clear connection between SCBM and a process of shared decision-making that results in improved participation, greater autonomy and a sense of empowerment for its participants. Moreover, for these schools SCBM is tightly linked to what is referred to in our evaluation framework as community connections — participation from parents and the community.

But SCBM's link to school improvement goals is less clear and more indirect. About half the schools list SCBM as an improvement priority over the four-year period. Expected changes in school climate (discussed as part of the improvement priorities dealing with student attitudes and, sometimes, curriculum) present another area of overlap between school improvement goals and expected outcomes for SCBM. The finding of student outcomes as acceptable evidence of SCBM even if academic achievement or instructional innovations are not cited as expected outcomes of SCBM is at first surprising. However, if we believe the purpose of SCBM and most innovations in schools is to improve student learning and outcomes, then these findings makes sense. Moreover, it fits well with the theory of SCBM.

This information also helps us to *weight* the different areas of expected impact of the SCBM model in order to evaluate SCBM's overall success across these schools (refer to figure 1). In light of this data, across all schools we expect to see substantial changes in school decision-making and parent and community connections. Significant changes in climate should also be expected. There should be more variation in improvements in curriculum and instruction as well as student achievement; therefore, the weighting assigned to assessing SCBM's overall success in these last two areas is lower.

4. Impact on School Decision-Making and Management

Shared decision-making and increased participation in school decisions are expected outcomes of SCBM at all levels. School practitioners, parents, community members, policy-makers and technical assistance providers all point to changes in decision-making processes and school management as a key SCBM goal. Overall, the nine schools in this study have made substantial progress in this area.

In this section, we examine the impact of SCBM on school decision-making and management practices. Key evaluation questions addressed in this section include:

- What SCBM decision-making structures and processes were established?
- Did school-communities gain a sense of empowerment?
- Do schools have the autonomy and flexibility they need to make improvements?
- How have school management practices changed?

The research questions relate to our criteria for "successful" SCBM efforts in this area, based on SCBM theory and school expectations; specifically, schools should have established shared decision-making structures and processes that work, gained a sense of empowerment, had the autonomy and flexibility they needed to make improvements and changed school management practices.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Findings Related to SCBM Decision-Making Structures and Processes

- ***All schools established SCBM councils and school decision-making processes, though most were moving in the direction of school-based decision-making prior to beginning SCBM.***

As anticipated, isolating the effect of SCBM has been difficult — even in the area of school decision-making. We learned from our site visits that nearly all schools (eight of nine) were practicing some form of school-based or participatory decision-making prior to beginning SCBM. But for most schools, SCBM formalized and refined this existing process by creating new structures and guidelines (for example, by-laws and other operating rules) and by broadening participation beyond teachers.

All schools successfully established SCBM councils composed of six role groups and chose consensus decision-making as the method for reaching decisions. While the majority of councils meet monthly for approximately two or three hours, two schools elected to meet on a quarterly basis for most of the day in order to maximize the time available for planning.

- ***All SCBM councils function as a forum for voicing concerns, mechanism for increased parent and student participation and vehicle for school-community communication. However, the councils' roles and responsibilities in certain areas of decision-making, schoolwide planning and problem-solving vary across schools.***

"SCBM nurtured the positive in our faculty and created a forum for everyone to participate positively. It brought out the best in myself, the parents and the faculty."

— Former Principal

Though emphases may vary, SCBM councils play some similar roles in school management and decision-making. In all schools the council serves as a forum for different role groups to voice concerns and as a mechanism for increased parent and student participation. The council's role as a communication network is also a powerful theme. Traditional parent organizations such as the PTA serve as a communication link to parents, though this group remains primarily in a fund-raising and classroom support role. These roles are viewed as among the major benefits of SCBM by nearly all role groups in the nine schools (see appendix).

Certain council roles differ from school to school. At most sites, councils are the school policy-making body, but the extent of influence and authority varies in different areas of decision-making (for example, curriculum and instruction, budget, personnel, and facilities). In some schools, councils are also the mechanism for planning, coordinating or legitimizing curricular and instructional innovations. And for a few schools, SCBM councils have become the vehicle for problem-solving.

- ***Schools with effective SCBM councils shared certain characteristics; but regardless of how well councils worked, all schools faced some common challenges.***

Schools with stronger, well-implemented SCBM councils — characterized by reasonably consistent participation from all segments and a majority of role groups that report the process worked well — tended to have 1) well-defined, frequently articulated guidelines and routines for operating, 2) clear goals or a unity of vision about

SCBM, 3) widely shared agreements on roles and responsibilities in different areas of decision-making and 4) principals who were able to share power and relinquish authority.

Regardless of the councils' effectiveness, schools faced a few common challenges. For example, we found that developing a council that works well takes time — even schools with prior experience in shared decision-making needed to build a broader base of participation and develop the trust necessary to share authority in certain areas. This is consistent with other research and is probably even more critical given Hawaii's long history of centralization. Yet time remains a challenge for nearly all (eight of nine) schools and is the most commonly cited weakness of the decision-making process. This is especially evident in teachers' comments which mention the time-consuming nature of SCBM as one of its key drawbacks.

Other commonly cited challenges are group process issues (mentioned by six schools). One group dominating — or being left out of — decisions and the use of the process to promote individual issues and concerns are examples of the continuing struggle with decision-making that some schools experience. Less common, but probably among the most contentious, is the issue of unclear jurisdiction, especially *within* a school. Many administrators and school staff report that all these challenges are exacerbated by turnover in council membership and inadequate training.

Findings Related to Empowerment

- ***By and large — even given difficulties some councils experience with decision-making — most role groups feel empowered within their school context.***

As the findings below will illustrate, we examined several indicators of "empowerment" ranging from perceptions of input and influence to feelings about authority. These indicators represent varying degrees of autonomy. *Input* can be thought of as having a voice in a decision, while *influence* is having an impact on that decision; and *authority* is having the power to make or set the criteria for that decision. For the most part, the evidence is fairly compelling that all role groups feel they have more input and influence in school decision-making than before SCBM, but perceptions about authority are more mixed.

- ***Most role groups feel they have more input and participate more in important school decisions than before beginning SCBM.***

"SCBM means the involvement of everyone, and no one is left out: families, parents, students, teachers, janitors, and community."

— Student

Our survey evidence indicates both teachers and parents feel they participate in important decisions. On our teacher survey, teachers were asked how much they agree with the statement, "Teachers participate in making most of the important educational decisions in this school," on a four-point scale of strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree. Of the 144 teacher respondents, 94 percent agree they are involved in key school decisions — with all teacher respondents in five schools strongly or somewhat agreeing with the statement. For two of these schools, more than 75 percent of the teachers (in one case, 100 percent) strongly agree that teachers participate in important educational decisions.

The majority of parents who responded to our survey agree with a similar question. They were asked how much they agree with the statement, "Parents are involved in major decisions about students," using a five point scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree). Overall, two-thirds of the parents surveyed feel they are involved in major decisions. The percentage of parents with positive responses (strongly agree or agree) within each school ranged from a high of 81 percent to a low of 46 percent. In four schools, more than two-thirds of parents reported feeling involved in major decisions.

- ***There is an increased voice in school decision-making, particularly for classified staff and students — role groups previously absent from schoolwide planning and decision-making.***

Common across all schools is the stronger voice of role groups in different areas of decision-making, especially the voice of those previously absent. Specifically, our qualitative evidence suggests that in about half the schools input from classified staff was absent prior to SCBM. Over three-quarters of classified staff who completed surveys commented that having input into decision-making was a major benefit of SCBM. For most schools, the SCBM council provided the first formal opportunity for participation and voice in school decision-making.

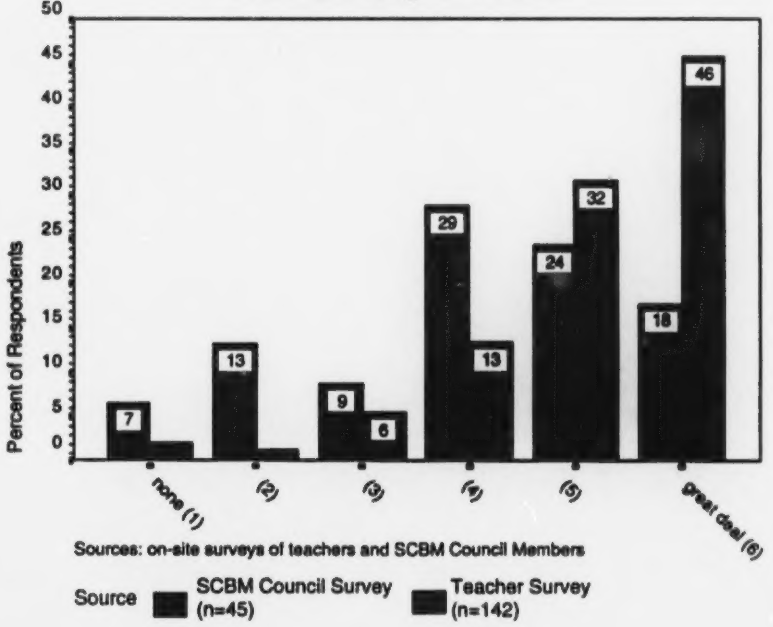
The qualitative evidence also points to increased levels of involvement in different areas of decision-making. For example, while teachers are usually involved in classroom and grade level curricular and instructional decisions, inclusion in decisions about budgeting and staffing are relatively new. Through the PTA, parents have traditionally been involved in fund-raising, and sometimes, decisions about facilities. For many, involvement in SCBM has given parents an opportunity to be involved in decisions about personnel and curriculum and instruction.

Student involvement in SCBM varies, though in most schools SCBM council meetings have offered the first opportunity for student voices to be formally represented in decision-making. Students tend to be most actively involved in student policy issues, such as lobbying for ice water drinking fountains or changes in food selections in the cafeteria.

- ***In nearly all schools, SCBM council members, especially teachers, feel they have more influence in school decision-making.***

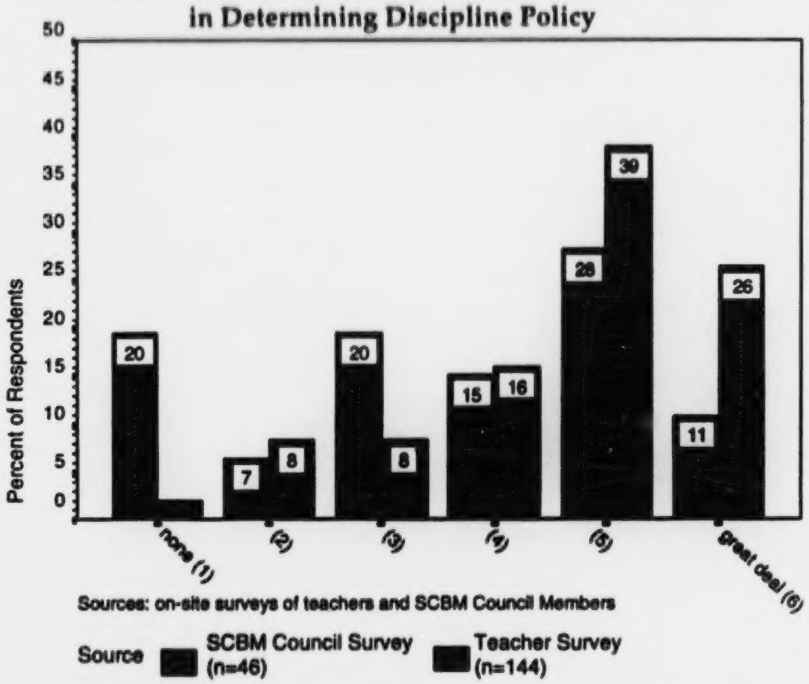
Evidence from our teacher and SCBM council member surveys indicates that both groups feel they have influence in several areas of school decision-making, but teachers feel they have more influence over these areas than council members. Both surveys asked respondents to rate on a six-point scale how much influence they think they have over determining school policy and establishing curriculum. As shown in figures 2 and 3, teacher respondents felt they had considerable influence in these areas, with more than three-quarters (78 percent) rating their influence on establishing curriculum as a five or six, in contrast to about half of the SCBM council members (42 percent). Both groups felt they had less influence on determining disci-

Figure 2
Perceived Influence of Teachers and SCBM Councils in Establishing Curriculum



Sources: on-site surveys of teachers and SCBM Council Members

Figure 3
Perceived Influence of Teachers and SCBM Councils in Determining Discipline Policy



Sources: on-site surveys of teachers and SCBM Council Members

pline policy, though, again, teachers believed they had more influence than SCBM council members.

- ***Compared to input and influence, perceptions of the degree of authority SCBM councils actually have — or should have — over certain areas of decision-making is mixed.***

The evidence on how much authority individual schools feel they have is fairly mixed. SCBM council members we surveyed were asked how much actual influence they feel they have on decisions concerning the hiring of new teachers and how much authority SCBM councils should have to hire principals and teachers. The majority of SCBM council members feel their actual influence on hiring practices is limited (54 percent of the respondents rate their influence as a one or two on a six-point scale), and most believe their input and/or authority to hire teachers and principals should be greater. In some ways, the fact that active SCBM participants are embracing the process and feel ready for more authority can be considered an indicator of SCBM's success.

Tables 2 and 3 show how much authority teachers, parents and SCBM councils feel councils should have in hiring teachers or

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principals. About half the parents and between one-fifth to one-sixth of the teachers have no opinion or are undecided about these two questions. In general, respondents in all groups who had an opinion felt SCBM councils should have authority in these areas. The exception is teachers, who are about evenly split on the idea of SCBM councils having the authority to hire teachers.

Table 2: Teacher, Parent and SCBM Council Opinions on SCBM Council Authority in Hiring Teachers

	strongly agree	moderately agree	undecided/ no opinion	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
Teachers	9.1	27.3	22.4	16.1	25.2
Parents	14.2	23.7	49.7	6.2	6.3
SCBM Councils	26.7	44.4	8.9	8.9	11.1

Table 3: Teacher, Parent and SCBM Council Opinions on SCBM Council Authority in Hiring Principals

	strongly agree	moderately agree	undecided/ no opinion	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
Teachers	17.6	35.2	16.9	14.8	15.5
Parents	15.0	22.2	50.6	5.7	6.5
SCBM Councils	31.1	44.4	15.6	2.2	6.7

Other evidence suggests teachers in these pioneer SCBM schools are more favorably inclined to the idea of SCBM councils having authority over hiring practices than other teachers in the state. We compared the question asked on our teacher survey with the same question on the survey conducted three years ago by the Task Force on Educational Governance. As shown in table 4, a higher percentage of teachers in the nine SCBM schools agreed with statements about the SCBM councils' authority to hire teachers and principals (36 percent and 53 percent, respectively) than teachers who responded to the same questions on the task force survey (15 percent and 25 percent, respectively).

Table 4
Comparison of Teacher Opinions on SCBM Council Authority in Hiring Practices from the Far West Laboratory and the Task Force on Educational Governance Surveys

SCBM Councils should have the authority to hire teachers.	Survey of Nine SCBM Schools (n=143)	Task Force Survey (n=3023)
strongly agree	9.1	2.8
moderately agree	27.3	12.7
undecided	22.4	17.9
moderately disagree	16.1	19.3
strongly disagree	25.2	47.2
SCBM Councils should have the authority to hire principals.	Survey of Nine SCBM Schools (n=143)	Task Force Survey (n=3023)
strongly agree	17.6	6.4
moderately agree	35.2	18.4
undecided	16.9	18.7
moderately disagree	14.8	17.9
strongly disagree	15.5	38.6

- ***While actual participation in decision-making — or opportunities for it — may be similar across schools, it is experienced and interpreted very differently depending upon the expectations various role groups and schools hold about the role they should play in school decision-making.***

Our qualitative evidence suggests that role groups in different schools have different expectations about the type of participation they should have in school decision-making. For example, we found parents and teachers at some schools feel having input into school decisions is sufficient, as evidenced by their comments on surveys and their satisfaction with current levels of participation. In contrast, parents or teachers at other schools may have substantial input and even influence, but they expect to have *more* influence or authority over school decisions in certain areas.

An interesting example is the decision to hire principals. Currently most districts include parents and teachers in the process of selecting school administrators. Depending upon their expectations, some school-communities feel very satisfied with this level of participation and think they have substantial influence. Others expect more influence and authority, and view this simply as input.

This is evidenced in their frustration — as well as the kinds of waiver and exception requests they submit. In short, while participation may be similar across schools, it is experienced and interpreted differently depending upon the expectations of each role group or school.

- ***Although there are a few schools where authority over decision-making areas creates dissension within the school, a greater issue exists between schools and the state because schools perceive their authority to make decisions as either limited or constrained.***

Feelings about the extent of SCBM council authority vary within and across schools. While there are a few schools with issues regarding authority within the school, the larger issue is the perceived limits on authority between school and state. In most schools, certain individuals or role groups feel their actual authority to make decisions in specific areas is either limited or hindered by the state, typically resulting in considerable frustration, loss of momentum, and in the extreme, consideration of whether to continue SCBM. In four schools, these perceptions were particularly pronounced (i.e., widely and intensely shared by school staff and parents, and sometimes students).

Findings Related to Flexibility and Autonomy — the Waiver and Exception Process

In theory, the ability to waive certain rules, policies and regulations in SCBM should provide schools with more flexibility and autonomy. We analyzed state SCBM office records on requests for waivers and exceptions in the first nine schools in order to learn about the *areas* in which schools feel they need more flexibility and autonomy. We then examined the evidence on how well the waiver and exception process has worked to provide it.

- ***Schools wanted greater flexibility in several areas but shared a desire for more autonomy over the selection and hiring of personnel and restructuring of time to embark on new curricular and instructional directions.***

Among the early SCBM schools, state office records show that the first nine schools filed 65 requests to further their change efforts, two of which were later withdrawn by the school. As shown in table 5, more than two-thirds of the changes schools requested were related to decisions in two areas: personnel or curriculum and instruction.

Table 5: Areas and Number of Changes Requested By Early SCBM Schools[5], May 1990–March 1995 (N= 63)

Personnel (n = 7 schools)	24 = 38%
• Ensure staff and/or administrators share same philosophy and approach through changes in hiring, selection, retention and/or benefit policies (e.g., withhold posting of positions, give council input/authority to select principal and staff, etc.)	17
• Increase staff (e.g., add vice-principals, increase part-time positions to full-time)	3
• Flexibility in how positions or staff are used	4
Curriculum and Instruction (n = 7 schools)	20 = 32%
• Restructure school day, week, year or teacher preparation time to create and/or accommodate new programs (e.g., year-round school, modified five-day schedule)	8
• Alter schedules to create more staff development time	4
• Program enrichment or enhancement (e.g., reduce class size; discontinue certain types of testing, purchase prizes for self-esteem program, etc.)	7
Authority Over Student Population (n = 4 schools)	6 = 10%
• change admission requirements or enable principals to approve geographic exception requests in accordance with SCBM council priorities	
Build School-Community (n = 2 schools)	
• enable staff who live outside attendance boundaries to send their children to school; name building after staff member	4 = 6%
Facilities (n = 4 schools)	
• control use of grounds, add air conditioning, change capital improvement priority	4 = 6%
Budget (n = 2 schools)	
• lump-sum budgeting prior to change in procedures	2 = 3%
Miscellaneous (n = 3 schools)	
• change classroom utilization report to ensure pre-school can be housed on-site or change evaluation requirements to avoid duplication of school effort	3 = 5%

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[5] This includes waivers, exceptions and other requests related to changing statutes, rules, regulations, administrative policies and procedures as well as collective bargaining agreements.

Requests that gave schools more flexibility and authority over personnel issues were among the most common, with seven of the nine schools requesting such changes. A closer analysis reveals that the majority of these requests were related to school efforts to ensure that the philosophy and approach of staff and/or administrators were consistent with the school's vision and direction. For example, four schools wanted to withhold advertising positions during the transfer period in order to give probationary teachers who were already at their site priority to remain — thereby retaining teachers familiar with their efforts. Rural schools often sought waivers that would help them retain teachers by enabling probationary and tenured teachers to seek available positions on an equal basis (two schools) or to give probationary credit for work to staff who accepted hard-to-fill positions in certain areas, such as special education (two schools). Schools embarking on dramatically new directions in program sought to ensure staff would maintain the same benefits whether they chose to stay or leave. Several schools also wanted more flexibility in how certain staff positions were used (two schools) and more input and authority to select staff or the principal (five schools). The latter was particularly key to schools that had already set and begun a certain course and were concerned about changes in administrators. Other issues related to personnel included requests to increase staffing.

Not surprisingly, nearly a third of school requests were related to curriculum and instruction. Seven of the nine schools submitted requests in this area. In particular, schools often wanted to restructure use of time. They sought to alter the school day, week, year or teacher preparation time in order to create a new program (for example, year-round school). Some required more time for staff to work and plan together and participate in staff development activities. More than half of the requests in this area (n=12), or about 18 percent of all requests, were related to restructuring time. Other requests related to curriculum and instruction — changing assessments (three requests by two schools) or reducing class sizes (two schools) — were part of major new programs schools had designed.

- ***Limited requests to waive rules and regulations in other areas that the literature on school-based management points to as important, such as facilities or budget, tend to reflect departmental or legislative changes in resource allocations, procedures and statutes, rather than a lack of desire or need for flexibility in these areas.***

While our site visits suggest that facility improvements were part of several school efforts and decisions in which SCBM councils actively participated, surprisingly few requests were made in this area. Our interview data suggests that with facilities the issue is more often resources than flexibility. This may account for the small number of requests. Our site visits suggest that several schools directly lobbied the legislature for resources to improve their facilities. This is also the area in which schools encountered the greatest difficulty and frustration — often with long wait times to process these requests (discussed in more detail subsequently).

The literature on school-based management points to budgets as an area in which many schools desire and need more flexibility, yet only two requests for more budget flexibility were made by these first schools. This small number is deceptive because changes in procedures and statutes made this point moot. Specifically, the two school requests for more budget flexibility were made prior to, and resolved by, the new budget flexibility procedures for SCBM schools introduced at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year. By the end of the school year, legislation passed that included lump-sum budgeting for all, not just SCBM, schools.

Schools also wanted more authority over the students who attend their school. While one school sought to change admissions requirements for the school and certain programs, three schools wanted the SCBM council and principal to play a stronger role in geographic exceptions (i.e., exceptions allowing students who live outside the school attendance boundaries to attend their school).

- ***Although procedures for making a request are reasonably straightforward, the process of granting or denying it can be a long, complex and time-consuming one for schools — sometimes deterring schools from making requests.***

Since requests are the primary way for schools to gain flexibility, one interesting question is why certain schools did not make more requests. Three schools made very few (two or less) requests. Principals at two of these schools felt they already have the autonomy they need to make the desired changes, that permission is rarely needed, and if they are out of compliance, they will be informed. Anecdotal evidence from these as well as other schools suggests that requests are sometimes seen as problematic and overly time-consuming (discussed in more detail subsequently). In addition, because schools typically research their requests before submitting them, they are less likely to submit ones they know have been denied previously.

Actually making a request to the board is relatively simple, but the process of granting (or denying) it is a long and complex one. The state SCBM office examines requests and prepares recommendations for the relevant committees of the State Board of Education (student affairs committee), the unions (collective bargaining committee) and the governor (who waives requests applicable to other state agencies such as the Department of Accounting and General Services). An SCBM exception review committee comprised of board and union representatives determines whether requests are waivers or exceptions; once agreed upon, requests are transmitted to the respective committees. Committees then make recommendations and the Board of Education votes to approve or deny requests. In some cases, requests can be handled administratively (e.g., by the district) or are related to state statutes and, therefore, forego this process. More details on this process and a graphic representation are included in the appendix.

- ***While those at the school-community level perceive the Department of Education or Board of Education — or simply the "state"— as limiting their autonomy, only half the requests for waivers of rules and regulations are related to areas under board or department authority; half are related to collective bargaining agreements and fall under union authority.***

By and large, requests are equally divided between *waivers* related to areas of departmental and board authority and *exceptions* related to union collective bargaining agreements, as shown in Table 6. Of the 63 requests that required action[6] about 40 percent were for waivers of department policies and procedures and required board action. Nearly half of school requests (48 percent) were for exemptions from union collective bargaining agreements. Similarly, of the eight other requests, three were prohibited by state statutes and one was already provided for under collective bargaining agreements.

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[6] Two submitted waivers were withdrawn by the school and as a result did not require action. This accounts for the difference in the total requests listed in this table and the previous one.

Table 6
Types and Status of Requests for Nine Schools

Type of Request	Total Requests	Status of Request			
		Approved	Denied	Pending	Default/Moot
Waiver	25	15	6	2	2 default
Exception	30	28	2*		
Other	8	4**			1 moot 3 resolved***
Total	63	45	8	2	8

Table Notes:
* These requests required both BOE and Exception Review Committee approval; it was denied in committee and therefore never went to the board.
** Of these requests, two were provided for in existing procedures.
*** These requests were prohibited by law but eventually resolved by amendments to the law and changes in budget and personnel procedures for SCBM.

These findings are interesting because they point to potential misconceptions or misunderstandings at the school level about who currently has power or authority over requests. While the "state" (and typically schools were referring to the Department of Education/Board of Education) is often perceived by schools we visited as limiting school authority and autonomy, these findings show that nearly half of the requests made are related to collective bargaining agreements and are therefore not under board or departmental authority.

Also of note, schools did not generally ask for waivers in areas where they already had authority. Because schools often research whether other schools have submitted similar requests — and the outcome of those requests — prior to submitting one, only two of the 63 requests were already provided for under existing collective bargaining agreements or board and departmental policies and procedures.

- ***While the majority of school requests are approved, the time it takes to resolve certain requests can limit school autonomy.***

The majority of the requests made by the first nine schools were granted, and overall, about three-quarters of school requests were approved. Of the 25 requests for waivers, only about a quarter of them (24 percent) were denied. Similarly, of the 30 requests requiring exceptions, only two (3 percent) were denied.

At first glance, the small number of denials suggests the process is a relatively smooth one. However, apart from denial of key requests, the evidence suggests school autonomy and authority may be limited in other ways, most notably in the time it takes to resolve certain requests. As shown in Table 6, seven of the 63 requests are either still pending (no action has been taken), were resolved by default (became subject to implementation because action was not taken) or became moot (no longer required because circumstances at the school changed). A closer analysis suggests that in these cases, several months, to more than a year, passed before they became moot or were resolved by default. The status of two requests has been pending for over two years.

- ***Although the process appears to be improving, schools wait an average of approximately three months for requests to be processed after official submittal. The pre-submittal process usually takes a minimum of one month.***

Data on the length of time needed to process requests tend to support school perceptions of the process as a slow and cumbersome one (see Table 7). Table 7 includes only information on requests that were submitted to the SCBM exception review committee for action. Unfortunately, we have no information regarding how long it takes to process requests handled administratively — whether approved or denied. As shown in Table 7, of the 63 requests, about two-thirds (43 or 68 percent) were acted upon. Average "wait time" for schools — the average number of weeks between the time a request is officially submitted and finally approved by the board or collective bargaining committee — is thirteen weeks, or about three months. The actual process is much longer when the time schools spend discussing, researching and revising a request for official submittal is included.

Table 7
SCBM Waiver and Exception Requests and Time (Number of Weeks) Needed to Process Requests[7]
(SCBM State Office Data)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Number of first nine schools making requests	2	4	5	3	5	4	9
Total number of requests	11	12	18	9	9	4	63
Total number of requests acted upon	10	9	9	6	7	2	43
Total number of weeks to process those requests acted upon	204	123	130	67	89	9	622
Average number of weeks between official submission and approval or denial	20.4	13 .7	14.4	11.2	12.7	4.5	12.8

This data indicates the process appears to be improving because the average wait time has been significantly reduced. During the first year (school year 1989-90) it required on average five months (20 weeks) to process school requests. This past year (Year 6, July 1994-June 1995) school wait time dropped significantly to four and a half weeks.

Other evidence suggests that these are conservative estimates of actual wait time. School documentation and records as well other anecdotal evidence indicate that schools usually spend several weeks researching whether they need to submit a request and investigate any prior similar requests before actually submitting one. Also, some schools are asked to revise and resubmit a request before it is sent to the committee for action or logged as a submitted request. For example, in one school a request was researched and then submitted in mid-May. The school was asked to revise the request; they did so and resubmitted it in November. Action was taken by the board in mid-February of the following year.

As a result, rather than providing flexibility and autonomy, the process is often seen by schools as a slow and frustrating one. School wait time may be considerably longer than official records show. Moreover, many schools make plans near the end of the previous school year (April–May requests) or the start of the next in anticipation of implementing the desired changes in the new school year. Long delays often translate into lost momentum or diminished interest in making the change and, ultimately, into disenchantment with the process.

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[7] More detailed information on requests, broken down by waivers, exceptions, other requests and other administratively handled waivers, is included in the appendix.

- ***The longer schools waited for requests to be processed — whether their requests were approved or denied — the more likely schools were to feel school authority is limited by the state.***

Long delays seem to be related to school perceptions of state limits on their autonomy. The aggregated data on time needed to process requests masks individual school experiences — and those experiences are critical to school perceptions and attitudes toward the board and department. Excluding the two requests still pending, the average time to process waivers is substantially different for different schools. Among the nine schools, three schools waited between an average of 4-6 weeks for their waivers to be processed (low wait time). For another three schools, the average wait time was between 9-13 weeks (moderate wait time). For the remaining third, it took an average of 22 weeks for waivers to be processed (long wait time).

In Table 8, average wait time is categorized and compared to school perceptions of how much the board and department limit authority[8].

Table 8
Comparison of School Wait Time to Perceptions of Limits to Authority (n=9 schools)

	Low Wait (4-6 Weeks)	Moderate Wait (9-13 Weeks)	High Wait (22 Weeks)
HIGH Perception of Limitations	–	1	3
LOW Perception of Limitations	3	2	–

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[8] As noted previously, from our qualitative data we identified four schools which feel strongly that their authority is limited or hindered by the state. Schools are categorized as high on this dimension when perceptions are widely and intensely shared by several role groups, including school administrators, staff, parents and, often, students. Schools rated as low had fewer numbers of individuals and role groups who shared the same perception.

All three schools with long wait times felt very strongly that school authority was limited; this is in stark contrast to the two (of three) schools that had moderate wait times, and none (of three) schools with the shortest wait times.

Findings Related to School Management Practices

- ***To date, SCBM's impact on school management practices is limited, though SCBM shows promise of affecting school planning and evaluation practices.***

A final criteria for success is SCBM's impact on school management practices. Several schools have developed task forces or committees to facilitate planning or research activities, although few have established permanent structures. Used by a number of schools in their early planning processes for SCBM, such structures helped schools broaden school-community participation — essential for developing the school's proposal to implement. Several schools continue to use task forces on an ad hoc basis to study specific issues to be reported to the SCBM council. Only one school has established permanent task "focus groups" that meet on a regular basis and are designed to represent all segments of the school-community. Each of the four focus groups creates activities and evaluates progress toward school goals. It is the SCBM council's responsibility to establish, monitor and link the work of the task focus groups.

Developing a capacity for self-evaluation and assessment is another indicator of improved school management. Though most schools have had at least one formative evaluation of their efforts over the four year period, few schools have developed the capacity to do this independently. For example, with the assistance of the Department of Education evaluation section, the Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory and the University of Hawaii, nearly all schools conducted at least one formative evaluation of their efforts. About four schools evaluate their SCBM efforts regularly. However, with the exception of one school, most of these efforts are contracted to outside consultants or conducted by individuals (usually school principals). In one school, an annual conference coordinated by the SCBM council sets the stage for a re-assessment of school goals and an examination of progress toward those goals. This kind of ongoing self assessment and reflection is not yet a part of many schools, though SCBM shows promise for affecting school management practices.

SUMMARY

Demonstrated by the findings above, SCBM has had a substantial impact on school decision-making practices and a limited impact in the area of school management. Not only have all of these early SCBM schools established schoolwide decision-making structures and processes, but for the most part, all role groups feel they now have a voice — greater input and influence in school decision-making — accompanied by a sense of empowerment within their school context. SCBM's effect on school management practices has been smaller and more gradual, though it shows promise of affecting planning and evaluation in schools.

SCBM's impact on school autonomy and authority is more mixed. Satisfaction with the extent of SCBM council authority and autonomy is related to different experiences and expectations for participation in decision-making. More widespread perceptions of limits on school authority and autonomy are often related to experiences with the waiver and exception process — a slow, cumbersome and frustrating process for many schools, intended to provide flexibility. From a school-community point of view, long delays in processing requests translate into missed opportunities for improvement because they result in lost momentum or diminished interest in making the change in the short run, and disenchantment with the SCBM process in the longer run. The experience of these nine pioneering schools may be different from those that will follow. However, the need for maximum flexibility — with state support and assistance — for school improvement will continue, and SCBM shows promise for shaping these efforts as well as school perceptions and attitudes toward the state.

5. Impact on School-Community Connections

According to the theory behind site-based management, by decentralizing decision-making to the school level and involving community members, businesses and organizations in the decision-making structure, SCBM schools should gain increased commitment and support from their communities, as well as from school staff, students and parents. Our findings on school-community connections indicate that heightened community involvement of this type has, for all of the schools in our study, done just that. It is in the area of school-community connections that we found the most compelling and consistent evidence of a strong impact by SCBM on the nine schools in our study.

This section examines the impact of SCBM on the relationships between schools and their surrounding communities, including businesses, organizations and individual community members. A vital part of school-community connections is the relationship between schools and the families of students. Therefore, included in this section is an analysis of the nature of the interactions between schools and students' parents (and other family members). Key evaluation questions addressed in this section include:

- What role has SCBM — through its decision-making and other activities — played in improving school-community relations?
- How have parent and community support for schools changed and what role has SCBM played in that process?

An in-depth exploration of the impact of SCBM on parents appears later in the parent outcomes section.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- ***There is a strong link between SCBM decision-making and improved school-community connections***

As the data below will demonstrate, there is a strong relationship between the level of community and parent involvement in school decision-making and the extent to which communities and parents support and participate in additional aspects of public education. According to school-community members we interviewed, community involvement in the SCBM process has helped to develop effective collaborations in other areas, such as providing resources to the schools, supporting school efforts and participating in a variety of non-decision-making activities.

> **"We're not so insular anymore; we see more of the community influence at the school."**
>
> **— Teacher**

Most of the nine schools report increased collaboration with community agencies and businesses to provide services for students and their families. Some schools in particular have established new or expanded programs that provide services to students and their families, both on and off campus. As noted above, for some schools, SCBM has helped to establish such relationships for the first time.

- ***Through SCBM, schools have successfully improved school-community connections.***

For several schools, prior to SCBM there was little or no school-community connection. The implementation of SCBM has provided an effective vehicle for building relationships among community members, businesses and organizations because it explicitly defines a role for the community in the life of the school. Once established, such relationships have flourished to include a variety of activities and projects — not all directly related to SCBM.

- ***For all of the schools in our study, home-school connections have improved since the implementation of SCBM.***

Parent involvement in the nine schools has increased both in depth and breadth. A greater percentage of parents at each school are involving themselves in the school, and they are participating in a broader spectrum of activities. According to on-site interviews and the parent survey, parents have more contact and communication with school staff — particularly teachers — than they did prior to the implementation of SCBM. On average, 45 percent (from 26 percent to 65 percent by school) of parents surveyed stated they participate more in school events or activities now than they did five years ago. Of these parents, an average of 70 percent reported having more contact and communication with their children's teachers.

> **"SCBM has made us a 'we'; teachers and parents are working together to improve learning opportunities for students. More parents are involved than before. We've provided a lot of opportunities."**
>
> **— Teacher**

Parents are increasingly aware and supportive of curricular and instructional practices as well as the school's improvement goals and efforts. At all nine sites, interviews with principals, teachers, staff and parents revealed that through their growing involvement with the schools, parents have become increasingly supportive of the schools' goals, as well as the teachers' efforts to improve the educational process and outcomes for students.

The Effective Schools Survey (ESS) data tend to support our findings regarding positive school-community relations. The majority of parents, students and staff at the nine schools consistently give positive responses to the set of questions about communication, inclusion and involvement of parents with their child's school. Table 9 shows the statewide average on this set of questions for school years 1992–1994 for all Hawaii elementary schools compared to the nine schools in our study. While on average, school staff and students of the nine SCBM schools scored slightly lower (one and three percent, respectively) than their counterparts across the state, parents of the nine SCBM schools scored an average of eight percentage points higher than those of all elementary schools.

Table 9
Effective Schools Survey Home School Relations: Mean Percent Positive Response[*]

	Statewide Composite of Elementary Schools, 1992-94	Average of Nine Senior SCBM Schools, 1992-94
Parents	71	79
Staff	81	80
Students	67	64

- ***Community members, businesses and organizations are becoming more invested in the schools politically and financially.***

Community participation in decision-making in the schools has increased since the schools implemented SCBM. Although prior to SCBM some schools solicited or received input from community members and businesses, its implementation has led to the formalized inclusion of community members in the decision-making process. As a result, communities are providing an increased level of political support to their schools. Many schools reported receiving assistance from organizations, businesses and community members in applying for grants, defending waiver and exception requests before the Board of Education and other types of political support from community members.

Due to their increased involvement and interest in the schools, many businesses have become involved in providing funding or in-kind resources. Most schools report receiving more monetary and in-kind support from community businesses and organizations than they did prior to implementing SCBM. Administrators, teachers and staff pointed specifically to community support in the form of direct grants and in-kind contributions, such as computer hardware and software, building materials and volunteer assistance at their schools.

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[*] Positive responses include "agree" or "strongly agree" to a series of statements indicating positive home-school relations.

- ***The reputations of many of the schools have been enhanced as a result of SCBM.***

School community members at almost all the schools we visited reported the reputation of their school was bolstered with SCBM implementation. It appears that a number of factors are responsible for this, including improved quality of faculty, curricular and instructional practices and facilities, as well as parent and student satisfaction. In some cases, schools had already been engaged in improvements, but with the advent of SCBM, more community members are aware and thus supportive of schools' efforts.

At some of the schools, people we interviewed suggested that increased involvement of the community and parents, as well as various SCBM-related activities, have helped to protect school campuses from violence, drugs and vandalism, thereby enhancing public perception of the schools. Another indication that schools' reputations have improved is that at several schools administrators noted the number of families applying for geographic exceptions to enroll in their schools had increased. This suggests there is growing interest in SCBM schools due to publicity regarding the school's curricular and instructional innovations and improvements.

Another indication of enhanced school reputation is provided by the parent survey which shows parents of students attending the nine schools consistently rated their children's schools higher than other elementary schools in the district and public school system in general. In addition, the majority of parents surveyed said their children's school had improved over the last five years.

Finally, in many cases the willingness of community businesses and organizations to invest in the schools appears to be due to their enhanced reputations. At least one school was awarded a sizable grant because its improved reputation was perceived to potentially draw new middle class families to the community.

SUMMARY

For each of these schools, implementation of SCBM has led to dramatic improvements in the relationships between the school and its immediate community, including businesses, organizations, individual community members and families. This has led to enhanced community support for schools, improved school reputations and improved images of entire communities.

According to our analysis of interview and survey data, the connections between schools and their communities have grown stronger with SCBM, and the schools are benefiting from increased community support. Conversely, at least several of the communities have benefited from the enhanced reputations of their neighborhood schools, which make the communities more appealing to potential residents and commercial enterprises.

Our findings on enhanced school-community connections are consistent with the expectations of school-community members at all nine schools who predicted that SCBM would lead to increased parent and community involvement. Moreover, there is evidence that other outcomes expected by several of the nine schools were achieved as a result of SCBM. These outcomes include the establishment of more effective communication networks, improved community outreach and greater awareness and understanding of the schools' vision and goals by parents and community members.

6. Impact of SCBM School Improvement

The literature on site-based management and the theory of SCBM indicate that shared decision-making stimulates school improvement. In this study, school improvement covers a vast territory ranging from physical environment (safe, clean and adequate facilities), to school climate (both academic and social), as well as curriculum and instruction and the norms and values that comprise a learning environment or school culture. Overall, we found that SCBM may not necessarily cause or generate ideas for improvement — especially curricular and instructional improvement — but it can assist in creating a school climate and culture to support it.

This section focuses initially on the improvements undertaken by schools and then examines the relationship and impact of SCBM on school improvement. Because the theory of SCBM and schools' expected outcomes suggest that SCBM's effect on this area is often mixed and indirect, we addressed the following key evaluation questions:

- What improvement goals did schools set, and to what extent did they achieve them?
- What school features supported significant improvement — particularly curriculum and instructional change?
- How is SCBM related to these common characteristics of success in school improvement?

MAJOR FINDINGS

Findings Related to School Improvement Goals

- ***The most commonly set school improvement goals involved changes in curriculum and instruction.***

Earlier we discussed the difficulty of isolating SCBM goals and effects from those of school improvement plans and other reforms. At the same time, we talked about the loose connection between SCBM and school improvement. This paradox — that SCBM and school improvement goals are on the one hand, inseparable, and on the other hand, not well-connected — in part reflects the tensions of moving from one paradigm of school improvement to another. It also reflects the numerous dimensions of school improvement, only some of which may be related to SCBM or directly affected by it.

To obtain a more thorough and detailed picture of school improvement goals for each site, Far West Laboratory staff integrated information from SCBM proposals and school improvement plans with site interviews and observations.[10] Table 10 lists the general categories of goals given as the foci for major school improvement and the number of schools that explicitly cited these foci as SCBM goals during the four-year period. These data are more detailed than but are consistent with the data on improvement goals cited earlier (see earlier section on SCBM goals and expected outcomes).

Table 10
Categories of SCBM School Improvement Goals

School Improvement Foci	Number of schools citing focus as a school improvement goal
• Implement or research articulated or thematic curricula (cited 21 times)	9
• Develop problem-solving, critical thinking skills, developmentally appropriate curriculum	5
• Implement alternative assessments	4
• Introduce or improve technology in the classroom	1
• Increase student self-esteem, decision-making, social or behavioral skills	5
• Increase parent/community support, communication, or community/business partnerships	3
• Attract or retain excellent teachers	2
• Implement or improve early childhood education	2
• Upgrade facilities	1
• Implement parent education, support programs	1
• Increase decision-making involvement of various role groups	1
• Increase professional development opportunities	1
• Implement scheduling or calendar changes	1
• Institute support for changes	1

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[10] As part of the overall review of their school's profile, principals or groups of individuals at each school verified these goals for accuracy.

The most commonly-cited school improvement goal was to implement changes in the areas of curriculum and instruction, and substantial progress has been made by SCBM schools in these areas. Every year each of the nine schools set at least one SCBM goal that was directly tied to implementing changes in curriculum, pedagogy or instruction. In fact, of the 51 total SCBM goals set by schools since the program began, 31 of them were related to curricular, instructional or pedagogical changes. For example, since 1990, developing or implementing a schoolwide system of alternative assessment was reported four times by schools as a goal to be realized through SCBM. Five schools reported they were interested in implementing developmentally appropriate curricula, particularly in the area of improving students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. Twenty-one goals from five different schools reflected the decision to initiate integrated, thematic, or fully articulated curricula.

- ***Implementation of SCBM goals, particularly those involving curriculum and instruction, is uneven within and across schools.***

Although the numbers and kinds of changes in instruction and curriculum are easily measured, the extent and quality of these changes is more difficult to track. Our classroom observations and interview data show that even schools with similar goals and equal commitment had varying degrees of success attaining those goals. This is not surprising and is consistent with other research on restructuring schools (Carlos and Izu, 1995) that suggests implementation is often uneven.

A good example of this unevenness in implementation is in curricular improvements. Eight schools reported they had plans to implement new, student-centered, integrated, hands-on curricula in at least one content area (most frequently, math, science, language arts, or social studies). In all of these schools, new hands-on curricula have been adopted and are being used, to varying degrees, by teachers. Teachers, students and parents are enthusiastic about these changes, which they believe are directly related to improved student outcomes. However, by the 1994-95 school year, only four of these schools had realized the second part of their curriculum goals, which was to adopt a thematic, integrated approach to teaching and learning by articulating the curricula *across* grade levels.

Other evidence of inconsistencies in implementation of curricula was found among the six schools that addressed changes in instructional strategies in their goals statements. At some schools where adopting new student-centered pedagogy was a goal, students were highly engaged, and there was strong evidence of student-directed, constructivist learning. This was not the case in all schools, however. Some teachers appeared to have difficulty in the role of facilitator and seemed uncomfortable letting the students direct more of their own learning. In fact, several teachers expressed misgivings or questions about how to create and maintain a student-centered classroom. As stated previously, although most of these schools are using new, student-centered, hands-on, or cross-curricular activities, these activities are sometimes used in a mechanical, task-oriented fashion, and not as part of the process of inquiry.

As shown in Table 10, four schools listed developing or implementing a schoolwide system of alternative assessment as a goal to be realized through SCBM. At two schools, great strides have been made toward attaining this goal, and systemic changes have been made schoolwide with reporting methods, use of portfolios and student self-assessment. The effort at the other two schools has been less successful, however, and the original goal of implementing a schoolwide system of assessment has been exchanged for a teacher-by-teacher endeavor. In these schools, less than half the teachers are using alternative assessments, with each teacher more or less left on his or her own to figure out what to do. We would like to acknowledge, however, that since adopting new assessment methods is one of the most challenging and frustrating areas of instruction — particularly in light of new national frameworks and standards — all efforts in this area are, therefore, commendable.

"The school has changed a lot. Teachers are more focused on the students and communicate more with their parents. I wish all public schools would adopt SCBM."

— Parent

- ***All schools also sought to improve school climate and made considerable progress toward this goal.***

All nine schools sought to improve the climate and culture of their schools. Table 10 shows that at least 13 goals directly related to improving school culture and climate were set since SCBM began. As discussed previously, interviews, site observations and surveys confirm that most schools experienced a definite improvement in school culture and climate. At all nine schools, teachers, students, administration, parents and staff reported a heightened sense of collegiality and a new respect for the work of each group in the school. Knowledge of what particular role groups do in the school community was cited as a crucial component in the positive changes seen in school climate and culture. Through the process of decision-making, all groups gained new understanding and respect for the perspectives, activities, and concerns of other groups. In addition to the opportunity for increased and open interaction, they gained new, more effective communication skills.

Data from the Effective Schools Survey[11] tend to support our findings concerning improved school climates. In Table 11, responses from students, parents and teachers at these nine SCBM schools to questions regarding school climate are compared to all elementary schools administering the Effective Schools Survey during its first cycle, 1992-94. Because of the survey administration schedule imposed by the state (i.e., different districts completed the Effective Schools Survey in different years), ratings were aggregated over all three years and averaged for both the nine SCBM schools and all elementary schools in Hawaii.

Table 11
Effective Schools Survey Climate for Learning Measure: Mean Percent Positive Responses[12]

	Statewide Composite of Elementary Schools 1992-94	Average of Nine Senior SCBM Schools 1992-94
Parents	82	86
Staff	87	81
Students	68	70

Overall, parents, teachers and students in the nine SCBM schools show strong positive responses to the questions[13] regarding school climate. While these data are not a measure of change over time, they do provide an indication of how these SCBM schools compare to the statewide average for all elementary schools. As the table shows, parents and students — two role groups with whom SCBM specifically aims to strengthen ties and involvement — feel more positively toward their respective schools than parents and students in other schools. Although a large majority of staff (81 percent) at the nine SCBM schools feel positive about their schools' climates, slightly more elementary school staff across the state (87 percent) gave positive responses.

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[11] Begun in the 1991-92 school year, the Effective Schools Survey is a school environment survey administered on a three-year cycle to all Hawaii schools that includes a different group of districts each year. The current school year, 1994-95, marks the start of the second cycle.

[12] Positive responses = agree or strongly agree with a series of statements indicating positive school climate

[13] Parents and students are asked six questions about the school's physical, social and academic environments. An additional four questions asked of teachers and staff are related to work relationships with other teachers and staff.

- ***Schools also set improvement goals in other areas with more mixed results.***

Another goal explicitly set by two schools and implicitly sought by four others was the attraction and retention of excellent teachers. Here the schools were very successful and attributed that success directly to the SCBM waiver and exception process, which allowed them to override existing union regulations on job competition for probationary and transfer faculty.

Three schools targeted major changes in their physical plants as SCBM goals, and several other schools requested small improvements in facilities. The effort to upgrade their facilities was very frustrating for at least two of these schools, in large part due to what they viewed as an almost impenetrable bureaucracy at the district or state levels. One of these schools is still waiting for funds to be approved so they can begin rebuilding.

- ***Schools that made substantial improvements, particularly in the area of curriculum and instruction, had several characteristics in common that supported their improvement efforts.***

The unevenness the evaluators observed in how well different schools succeeded in attaining similar goals raises a question that is crucial to understanding the impact and implementation of SCBM in Hawaii's schools: What were the common characteristics or circumstances found in the schools that most successfully met the school improvement goals they set? In other words, what did it take for some schools to actually realize the kinds of significant changes all schools sought?

Our analysis of the qualitative data suggests that the schools experiencing the most positive and robust changes in instruction and curriculum all generated careful, defined *"plans of attack" prior to implementing any changes*. Rather than approach instruction and curriculum change from any vulnerable side, they took time — sometimes as much as a year — to plan and talk with various role groups and discuss their options, often forming task forces to investigate areas and reporting findings back to the council. Although this process was time-consuming, the results were worth the delay. Teachers, parents and administration shared a common philosophy of teaching and learning and had agreed upon the process they would enact to realize that vision.

These schools also gave *professional development priority* in their goals and developed *long-range staff development plans*. Special provision was made for professional development through exceptions granting changes in school calendars and daily schedules. This meant that teachers, parents and staff were able to participate in workshops and classes, engage in collaborative planning and teaming and conduct research into pedagogy, curriculum and assessment alternatives, without having to add these activities to already overburdened schedules. In addition, these schools used a significant portion of their SCBM funds to support professional development activities, hire specialists to research specific areas (for example, alternative assessment and cooperative learning), as well as pay substitutes for participating teachers. Moreover, besides maintaining a focus on staff development, these schools created long-range or strategic plans for staff development that were tied to their school improvement plans.

A *shared pedagogical vision* coupled with ample development opportunities gave teachers at these schools the support and preparation they needed to implement and carry through instructional and curricular changes.

There were also common characteristics and circumstances found at schools that were successful in implementing change in school culture and climate. The schools that were most positive about those changes were schools in which *all the role groups shared and clearly understood the school's mission and vision*. The goals that flowed from the vision and mission statements were arrived at by consensus among all groups and were reviewed and revised, if necessary, on an annual basis. Orientation training was given to new members coming onto the council, and the process of decision-making, the school's mission and vision, and the current SCBM goals were clarified and discussed.

In addition, those schools with the most positive cultures and climates were schools in which a structure and process of school decision-making was established and working reasonably well. That is, *all role groups had a clear understanding of their roles and* *responsibilities* in the decision-making process, and the *make-up of the council was truly representative of the school community*. At these schools, all role groups felt empowered and responsible for specific areas of decision-making and there was true team spirit among the council members. In schools where decision-making jurisdiction was unclear or where the demographic makeup of the council failed to reflect the school's make-up, there was more difficulty reaching consensus, and less trust was exhibited among role groups.

Finally, *strong, consistent leadership* (most often from the principal) seemed highly related to success in attaining SCBM goals. Although all but two schools experienced some type of shift in administration after becoming SCBM schools, changes in administration did not always have negative impacts on schools. Those schools that suffered from loss of leadership found themselves in one of two situations: either a new principal was hired who had a different vision for school improvement (hence the school's improvement goals and plans changed midstream), or the school never had a clearly delineated, workable plan for implementing change, and the new administration was unable to devise one. Schools that were the most successful in spite of changes in administration were those that enjoyed a positive, empowered school culture and a well-defined plan for implementing change, which was developed long before the principal left.

One other question remains regarding the role of strong leadership in implementing SCBM: Is it possible for a school that ***does not*** have a strong principal with a particular vision to successfully undertake SCBM? Because all nine schools had strong leadership prior to becoming SCBM schools, we are unable to answer this question. It appears, however, that without strong initial leadership and a guiding hand in forming school vision and goals, these nine schools would not have developed the organizational structure to pursue SCBM. Once SCBM is in place, however, there is evidence that a school can withstand the loss of its principal — *if the community has gained a spirit of trust and cooperation, and the vision and goals for the school have been agreed upon by all role groups.*

- ***SCBM can support significant school improvement by providing schools the resources and skills to work together. It can be directly tied to school improvement by providing needed resources (e.g., time and money) and setting the stage for increased communication and mutual respect.***

Most of the schools that were successful in implementing instructional or curriculum changes were convinced of the need to make those kinds of changes prior to becoming SCBM schools. They chose to become SCBM schools because it was recognized as an avenue for achieving these ends and realizing their visions. In fact, three of the schools that were most successful in attaining their school improvement goals had decided on a course of action for implementing instructional or curriculum changes prior to becoming SCBM schools. These schools were unable to pursue that course of action prior to SCBM because of financial limitations or scheduling constraints resulting from Department of Education rules or union regulations. Through the initial $11,000 grant and the waiver and exception process, SCBM provided schools two important advantages: it allowed them to alter their schedules in accordance with individual school needs (shorter weeks, longer days, year-round calendars, more pupil free days, etc.), and it gave them the funds to pay for programs, professional development, teacher release time and substitutes.

As discussed previously, those schools that were successful in attracting and retaining excellent teachers attributed their success directly to SCBM and the waiver and exception process. In these instances, the link between SCBM and school improvement is direct; without SCBM those changes would not have occurred.

In a similar manner, most schools directly credited SCBM with improving school culture and climate. Because of the time-consuming and frustrating nature of decision-making by consensus, the various role groups were afforded a unique opportunity to discover how other groups function and gain new understanding and insight into each other's perspectives. The respect gained for each role group was cited repeatedly as a crucial element in building a positive school climate and culture.

SCBM, then, is tied to school improvement in at least two critical ways: it can provide schools with time and money to make changes, and it can set the stage for increased communication and mutual respect. It cannot be said that SCBM caused school improvement in Hawaii, or that schools commonly used it to generate ideas for improvement or a new vision; but it can be said that when approached in a careful, planned manner, SCBM can provide a framework upon which schools can hang their goals and the tools they can use to make then work.

SUMMARY

Although there is wide variation in the kinds of school improvement goals set by schools, those relating to changes in curriculum and instruction and in school climate were most common. Implementation of schools' SCBM goals was uneven across schools. Often, schools with similar goals and equal commitment showed varying degrees of success attaining those goals. An analysis of the schools that were most successful in reaching their SCBM goals revealed seven shared characteristics of success. Typically, these schools 1) defined a careful, "plan of attack" prior to implementing changes; 2) gave priority to professional development, including long-range staff development plans; 3) had a shared pedagogical vision; 4) possessed a clear understanding of the school's mission and vision; 5) shared an understanding of role groups' roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process; 6) had SCBM councils which truly represented the school-community; and 7) enjoyed strong, consistent leadership.

Finally, the evaluation revealed that SCBM is tied to school improvement in at least two critical ways: it can provide schools with time and money to make changes, and it can set the stage for increased communication and mutual respect among role groups.

7. Impact of SCBM on Individual Outcomes: Parents, Teachers and Students

Through SCBM and school improvement activities, SCBM is eventually expected to improve outcomes for individuals. In particular, both the theory of, and schools' expected outcomes for, SCBM suggest parent confidence and satisfaction with schools should increase as a result of improved school-community relations and increased parental involvement. While the theory of SCBM points to similar changes in outcomes for teachers — and eventually students — school expectations for changes in this area are more mixed. Keeping in mind that changing individual outcomes, particularly for students, is a significant venture that is dependent upon other improvements occurring, the evaluation addresses several broad questions about outcomes for individuals:

- How have the outcomes of individuals changed? For example,
  - Have parent participation and involvement in the school changed?
  - Have parent confidence and satisfaction with schools and education changed?
  - Have teacher self-efficacy and decision-making power increased?
  - Have teacher work relationships changed?
  - Have teacher work satisfaction and commitment increased?
  - Do teachers and school staff share a stronger sense of school culture/climate?
  - Have student academic achievement and performance changed?
  - Have student attitudes and behavior changed?

- What role did SCBM play in these changes?

- What evidence is there to support these outcomes?

MAJOR FINDINGS ON PARENT OUTCOMES

While the impact of SCBM on parents was briefly addressed in the section on school-community connections, this section describes in more depth the various positive effects the implementation of SCBM has had on parents. Data on parent outcomes was collected during school site visits during which parents were interviewed about their perceptions of the school and SCBM. In addition, interviews with administrators, teachers, staff and other school-community members revealed trends in parent involvement. A survey of all parents of the nine schools was conducted. More than 50 percent of parents completed questionnaires, with a return rate for individual schools ranging from 21–71 percent for each school.[14] Given this remarkably high return rate — which in itself, seems to support our finding of a high level of parent involvement and concern — the data gathered provides a reliable basis from which to draw conclusions about parent attitudes and beliefs. Finally, to make comparisons between the parents we surveyed and parents of children attending other schools, we used existing data from the Task Force on Educational Governance and the Hawaii Public Opinion Poll.

Findings Related to Parent Participation and Involvement

- ***Parents participate more in school activities and events than they did prior to SCBM.***

According to the parent survey, across the schools, 45 percent of the parents stated that they participate more in school events and activities now than they have in the past five years. Notably, given its implications for school improvement, the most dramatic area of increased involvement is interaction with teachers. Seventy percent of the parents citing increased school involvement reported having more contact and communication with teachers than before SCBM. Other frequently reported areas of increased involvement include contact with school staff, volunteering in the school or their child's classroom, attending PTA or SCBM meetings and participating in special school events.

- ***Due to the complementary relationship between SCBM and the Parent-Community Networking Centers, parents have increased their involvement in their children's schools.***

Parent involvement in schools is encouraged by both SCBM and the Parent Community Networking Centers (PCNCs). School-community members of all nine schools cited the strong relationship between the SCBM councils and PCNCs; in seven of the nine schools, the PCNC coordinator serves on the council. The result is that parent participation in the school, including involvement in SCBM decision-making, is encouraged and reinforced. In several of the schools, the PCNC is a "home" for parents at the school, often providing the support parents need to feel comfortable while participating in their volunteering or decision-making activities. In many of the schools, the PCNC Coordinator ensures that parents receive information about SCBM and how it operates, including notices and minutes of SCBM council meetings.

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[14] In order to calculate accurate return rates and ensure the reliability of data collected, multiple efforts were made to collect and analyze only one questionnaire per family; it is not possible to verify that all duplicates were discarded.

- ***Parents are more knowledgeable about what is going on in their children's schools and are more supportive of the schools' efforts than they were prior to SCBM implementation.***

Due to attendance at SCBM council meetings, increased contact with school staff, and communications from the school to students' homes (such as SCBM council meeting minutes), parents are more aware of what is going on at their children's schools. Teachers reported that they feel increased support from parents because they are more apt to understand what teachers are trying to accomplish in the classroom through new curricula and innovative teaching and assessment methods.

> **"A lot of parents have not had the opportunities before to learn what their kids do at school; SCBM has provided avenues for parents to be more involved at the school and to see what's going on there."**
>
> **— Teacher**

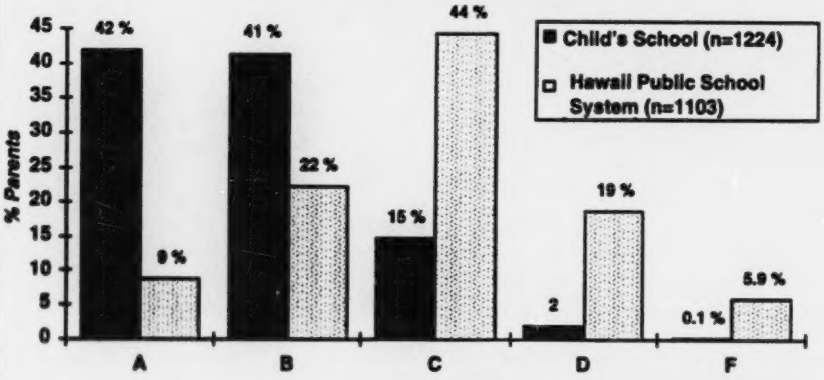
Many members of the school community reported that through the process of SCBM, various role groups have become better acquainted with, and thus more supportive of, the efforts of other role groups. According to many of the people we interviewed, this is particularly true for parents, who have developed more appreciation of the need for teacher professional development and other non-teaching activities. Parents are also less concerned about non-traditional schedules, the use of substitute teachers and the other mechanisms by which teachers create extra time for professional development and related meetings.

Findings Related to Parental Confidence and Satisfaction with Schools

- ***Parent confidence in their children's schools is high and increasing.***

In general, the responses of parents to survey questions measuring confidence are high. When asked to assign letter grades to schools, for example, the majority of parents gave their children's schools very high marks. In addition, parents consistently gave higher grades to their child's schools than to other elementary schools in the district. While about three-quarters of the parents on average assigned their child's school an "A" or "B", only about one-quarter of them graded other elementary schools in their districts this high. Parents also give higher marks to their children's schools than to the state public education system as a whole. According to the parent

Figure 4
Grades Assigned by Parents to Their Child's School and to the Hawaii Public School System



Source: Far West Laboratory parent survey

survey, across the nine schools, 42 percent of the parents assigned an "A" to their child's school, compared to only nine percent who gave an "A" to the school system as a whole. Figure 4 shows the grades parents surveyed gave to their children's schools, compared to the grades they assigned to the public school system as a whole.

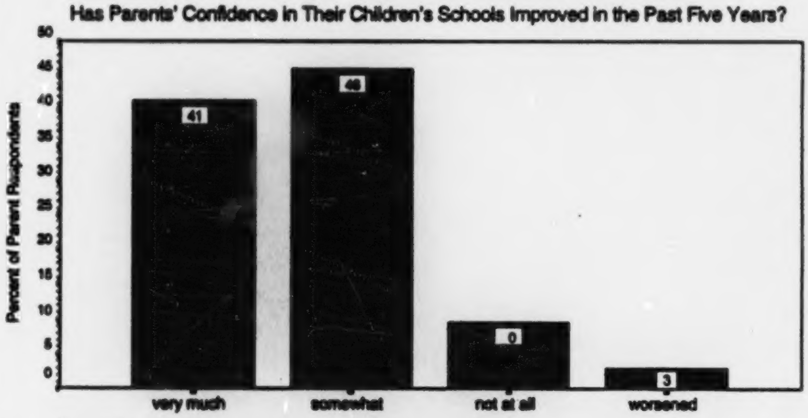
There are several indications that parent confidence in the nine schools is increasing. For example, several questions designed to measure parent confidence asked on the Task Force on Educational Governance survey (1992) of all public school parents were duplicated in our survey of parents at the nine SCBM schools. Specifically, we asked parents to grade their child's school and to grade the state's public school system in general. Using the same methodology to evaluate responses, we found that parents from the nine SCBM schools graded their child's school higher (B+) than all elementary public school parents (B) did on the Task Force survey. When these responses were categorized by island, they revealed an even more dramatic pattern; while grades given by parents in our survey were consistent across islands (B+), the Task Force survey results showed that schools in outer island districts received substantially worse grades from parents (B- and C+). This suggests that SCBM may be having a positive impact on parents, especially in outer island districts. In addition, since the Task Force survey was conducted three years prior to ours, it indicates that parent confidence in the schools increased during (and possibly as a result of) SCBM implementation. In Table 12 below, the difference between grades assigned by parents on the Far West Laboratory survey as compared to the Task Force survey, for the islands of Oahu, Hawaii and Kauai is shown.

Table 12
Comparison of Grades Assigned by Parents in the Far West Survey Sample and the Task Force on Educational Governance Survey Sample

Island	Far West Laboratory survey	Task Force survey
Oahu	B+	B
Hawaii	B+	B-
Kauai	B+	C+

Another indication that SCBM has resulted in increased parent confidence is that a majority of parents at each of the nine schools stated on the parent survey that their confidence in their children's school had improved over the past five years. On average, 87 percent of all parents across the nine schools felt this way, 41 percent of whom stated that their confidence had improved "very much." Three percent of parents had less confidence than before[15], while 10 percent of parents surveyed indicated that their confidence level had "stayed the same." Figure 5 indicates how parent confidence levels have changed. An analysis of written comments on the survey revealed that many parents selecting the "stayed the same" response felt their confidence level was already very high, or that they had not been at the school long enough to note changes.

Figure 5
Parents' Confidence in Their Children's School



Source: Far West Laboratory parent survey [n=1036 (315 no response)]

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[15] While on average three percent of parents report that their confidence has "worsened", this number is influenced upward by one relatively fairly high response (12 percent), which is likely a reflection of one school's internal conflicts.

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While it is not possible to prove that this high degree of parent confidence is a direct consequence of SCBM, an analysis of parent comments on the survey reveals many positive references to SCBM; for example, parents described being involved in the decision-making process at the school, having more contact with faculty and staff, the improved attitudes and behavior of their children, and various school improvement efforts that have grown out of SCBM.

In addition, parent confidence increased simultaneous to the establishment of SCBM at each of the schools. There appears to be a relationship between the developmental level of SCBM at a given school and the confidence level of parents. For example, those schools that have the most coherent school improvement visions and SCBM structures and functions that are consistent with meeting the school's goals, appear to also have the most satisfied and confident parents.

- ***The more involved parents are in their children's school and its decision-making process, the more confidence they have in the school.***

For the most part, those schools that have the highest level of parent participation in decision-making and other school activities appear to have the highest level of parent confidence and satisfaction. According to interviews with various members of the school communities, including parents, high parent satisfaction and confidence seem to result when parents are more involved in the school's vision for school improvement, have a better understanding of it and are aware of how school activities are related to achieving the school improvement goals. In a few cases, high parental involvement is related to low parental confidence and satisfaction; these instances tend to occur in schools where there are frustrations with the decision-making process at the school and/or state level.

"Because of SCBM parents are more comfortable coming onto campus, and there's more interaction between parents and staff."

— Classified staff member

- ***Parents have a high degree of satisfaction with their children's schools, which appears to have increased with the implementation of SCBM.***

To measure parent satisfaction, we included on the parent survey the same set of questions from the Effective Schools Survey which measure home-school relations. A majority of parents at each of the nine schools gave positive responses. The average percentage of positive responses was 80 percent across the schools (with a range of 73 percent to 88 percent of parents at each school responding positively). With one exception, the majority of parents at each school agreed that the school communicates regularly with parents (71–93 percent), parents often receive information about their children's progress (64–88 percent), school events are scheduled to encourage parents' attendance (65–87 percent), parents feel welcome at the school (80–95 percent), parents are involved in major decisions about students (45–81 percent[16]), and that parents are offered many options for school involvement (70–89 percent).

In addition to demonstrating a high degree of parent satisfaction, there is clear evidence that parents are experiencing an increased level of satisfaction with their children's schools. Comparisons of 1995 parent survey data with comparable Effective Schools Survey data from prior years[17] reveal that for most schools, home-school relationships have improved over the past one to three years (from the time parents took the Effective Schools Survey to when they completed our parent survey). Five of the nine schools show an improvement in home-school relations over time. Two of the nine remained stable with roughly three-quarters of the parents responding positively, while two show slight decreases over time. It appears that even those schools which show a decrease still have a high degree (approximately 75 percent) of parent satisfaction.

Summary of Major Findings on Parent Outcomes

As described above, SCBM is associated with positive parent outcomes. Our analysis of a wide array of data — including a large parent survey we conducted, interviews with parents, teachers and other school staff, and measures from the Task Force on Educational Governance and Effective Schools Surveys — show that parents at all schools appear to be extremely confident and satisfied with their children's schools, and that their confidence is growing. By taking part in school activities and meeting with teachers and staff, parents have become more familiar with and supportive of their children's schools, and consequently, more personally invested in their children's education. By all counts, there have been dramatic improvements at all nine schools in the quality and quantity of parent involvement — at least in part due to the implementation of SCBM. While administrators and teachers at most schools would like to see more parents become involved, it appears that across the board, schools have made significant strides in this area, and the results are clearly positive.

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[16] This is the one exception to a majority of parents having a positive response. In this particular case, a large percentage of parents are in fact involved in SCBM, but are currently having difficulties agreeing on process and jurisdiction issues regarding SCBM.

[17] The ESS is administered annually, although each school district is on a different three-year cycle. We compared responses to our survey with responses of the same schools with ESS results from 1992, 1993 and 1994, depending on which cycle a particular school was on.

MAJOR FINDINGS ON TEACHER OUTCOMES

In the process of our evaluation, five teacher outcomes were examined to determine how these areas were affected by participation in SCBM: 1) self-efficacy and decision-making power, 2) teacher collaboration, 3) teacher work satisfaction, 4) organizational commitment and 5) a sense of school culture. Teachers and school staff participated in classroom observations and interviews and completed individual surveys and questionnaires designed to evaluate their sense of self-efficacy and decision-making power, changes in the nature and extent of their collaboration with one another, and changes in their work satisfaction and organizational commitment. Both groups were also queried about changes they perceived in the school culture/climate.

- ***Teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and decision-making power have increased since SCBM was implemented.***

For indicators of teacher self-efficacy and decision-making power, we examined whether teachers and staff feel they: have more control over their jobs, adequate decision-making power to exercise their best judgments about school improvement and are receiving the appropriate professional development and support needed to meet new responsibilities associated with decision-making authority.

Overwhelmingly, teachers reported increases in their sense of self-efficacy and control over their jobs since SCBM implementation. The teacher survey revealed that freedom from bureaucracy at the school level, having a strong voice to provide input, and shared decision-making within schools were, respectively, the first, second, and third most cited benefits of SCBM. However, teachers at all schools except one also reported they felt Department of Education was still too controlling and an obstacle to school-based decision-making. Control by the State was the third most cited weakness of SCBM.

"SCBM gives us the freedom to do innovation. It's a very good link between parents and the school. SCBM has been a bridge to the philosophical exploration of teaching and learning issues."

— Teacher

Evidence of self-efficacy and increased decision-making power among teachers can also be seen in the survey results reported below.

Participation in making important educational decisions in the school. Most teachers strongly (49 percent) or somewhat (45 percent) agreed that they participate in making most of the important educational decisions in their schools. At one school, 100 percent strongly agreed, and at another, 79 percent.

Participation in establishing curriculum. Most teachers rated their influence over establishing curriculum at five (32 percent) or six (46 percent) on a six-point scale. This was an important decision-making area for teachers and one where they felt their expertise and professionalism was being recognized and put to use.

Participation in determining discipline policy. Most teachers rated their level of influence over determining discipline policy as five (39 percent) or six (26 percent) on a six-point scale.

- ***Although most teachers report increased collaboration with their peers and other staff since beginning SCBM, in some schools there is still concern that individuals use the consensus format to press personal agendas and hinder progress.***

Almost without exception, teachers reported increased collaboration among themselves and other staff since implementing SCBM. Due to cross role-group participation in task forces, committees, and general council meetings, teachers reported they are more empathic and respectful of different role groups and have a better understanding of the activities, concerns and perspectives of others. Increased communication and collaboration were the fourth and fifth most cited benefits of SCBM. Evidence of collaboration occurs in the following five areas.

Articulated, integrated, or thematic curricula in several schools. Two schools have implemented fully articulated curricula since becoming SCBM schools, and at least three others are planning to do so in the near future. The success of this instructional improvement depends heavily upon teachers' abilities to collaborate with and support one another, and especially upon their ability to maintain open communication and exchange of ideas.

Team teaching and collaborative planning. A few teachers at seven of the nine schools stated that since SCBM began they have started or more strongly implemented team teaching or collaborative planning sessions. This is further evidence that these teachers are interacting in a healthy, vital manner, and increasingly are depending upon each other for professional support and development.

"Before SCBM, we never knew what other grades were doing. Now we . . . know what other teachers are doing, even in other grades."

— Teacher

Increased cooperative effort. The teacher survey showed that 61 percent of teachers strongly agreed there was a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members at their schools. At four of the nine schools, over 75 percent of teachers strongly agreed with this statement.

Coordination of course content across grades. Most teachers either strongly agreed (50 percent) or somewhat agreed (46 percent) that they made conscious efforts to coordinate the content of their courses with that of other teachers. At two schools, 100 percent of the teachers either strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement, again reflecting strong collaboration among faculty.

Concern over lack of collaboration still was expressed by some teachers. Even though most teachers reported improvements in collaboration since beginning SCBM, lack of collaboration or promotion of individual agendas was the fourth most cited weakness of SCBM. Although progress is being made, at some schools there is still concern that individuals are continuing to use the consensus format to press personal agendas and "sandbag" progress. At one school, when asked whether there was increased cooperative effort among role groups, 54 percent of teachers somewhat agreed and 46 percent somewhat disagreed.

- ***For the most part, teachers' satisfaction with their work — as measured by a variety of indicators — has improved.***

We looked for evidence of teacher work satisfaction in their responses about general work satisfaction, support from the larger community, administration and other faculty, staff development opportunities, and collegiality and cooperation among teachers.

Overall, teachers expressed their work satisfaction had increased since SCBM began. Primary among the reasons given for feeling more satisfied, was increased access to resources and administration. This indicates teachers felt they were able to voice their needs and concerns, as well as to obtain the resources that would enable them to deal with their needs and address their concerns. Six indicators of work satisfaction were examined and are reported below.

Planning and scheduling flexibility. At six of nine schools, teachers pointed to the increased scheduling and planning flexibility afforded to them through the waiver process. This flexibility in planning and class time was crucial to teachers' feelings of being heard, respected, and empowered to affect change.

"SCBM provided incentives and support for teachers to change the way they teach. They undertook SCBM because they saw that parents were willing to support it and support teachers in making curricular changes."

— Administrator

Increased professional development opportunities. At those schools where professional development was a stated goal for SCBM, teachers reported the most job satisfaction and greatest capacity to make changes necessary to the realization of school visions and goals. Paid release time (from SCBM funds) to pursue professional development was crucial to teachers who did not have time to "somehow squeeze it in" their already overcrowded schedules.

Ability to attract and retain excellent teachers. Two schools had the stated goal of attracting and retaining excellent teachers. At five schools, the waiver process was used to obtain scheduling and planning flexibility and to grant requests regarding competition for faculty vacancies. At these schools, high teacher satisfaction was expressed during interviews, and teachers reported pride in the quality of education due to lower turnaround and the ability to attract better teachers.

Changes in instructional practices and curriculum. At schools where changes in instructional practices and curriculum were stated goals, teachers reported in interviews that through SCBM they gained decision-making power in these areas. This directly impacted job satisfaction.

Increased support from parents. A slight majority of teachers (51 percent) somewhat agreed in the survey that they had support from parents for their work with students. An additional 30 percent strongly agreed with that statement. At one school, 100 percent strongly agreed, and at another, 79 percent. However, lack of parental and community involvement was the number one weakness cited for SCBM. Although parental support and involvement is growing at SCBM schools, it has not yet reached a satisfactory level for some teachers.

Positive attitudes toward teaching. A large majority (85 percent) of teachers reported they disagree it was a waste of time to do their best as a teacher. When asked if they would become teachers again if they could start over, most said they would either certainly (48 percent) or probably (31 percent) do so. Even at one school that is in the midst of difficult transitions, 62 percent said they would choose teaching again. This is a clear indication that, though some schools are experiencing troubled times, teachers are nevertheless proud and hopeful about their contribution to children's lives — something they directly attribute to SCBM.

- ***By and large, most teachers are committed to accomplishing SCBM goals and participating in SCBM activities. However, sustaining these time-intensive commitments is an issue for many teachers.***

The evaluation looked for indications of increased commitment from teachers and school staffs. In particular, we examined teacher and staff willingness to put in extra hours and effort to accomplish SCBM goals and to help realize the schools' visions.

Teachers reported participating fully in SCBM activities, including serving on tasks forces, receiving staff development, attending SCBM council meetings, holding extra staff and faculty meetings and building consensus among role groups. These activities are, for the most part, taken on willingly and with enthusiasm. However, although teachers are engaged in time-intensive commitments, they view this issue as a potential sustainability problem for SCBM.

In fact, the third most cited weakness of SCBM was that it requires a tremendous time commitment from teachers. And on the teacher survey, some teachers complained of "burnout" because of the extra time burden added by SCBM activities and participation.

- ***While many teachers felt their schools had a strong school vision and community identity prior to beginning SCBM, all schools reported this vision became sharper and more consolidated with SCBM.***

To determine if teachers shared a sense of culture under SCBM, we looked at whether and how teachers and staff shared vision, goals, and values for school improvement, and whether they had a common understanding of the school's mission.

Overall, teachers reported in interviews and surveys that their sense of school culture/climate definitely improved since SCBM was implemented. Although many schools had strong visions for school improvement and well-developed community identities prior to SCBM, all schools reported this vision became sharper and more consolidated during SCBM. Evidence of enhanced school culture and climate in SCBM schools is shown below.

Clear, shared understanding of goals and priorities. Sixty-nine percent of teachers reported they believed the goals and priorities for their schools are clear. At five schools, at least 79 percent strongly agreed.

Shared values and beliefs about school's mission. Sixty percent of teachers strongly agreed that values and beliefs about their school's mission were shared by all staff. Another 35 percent somewhat agreed. At four schools, 73 percent, 77 percent, 79 percent and 92 percent (respectively) of the teachers strongly agreed with this statement.

Summary of Major Findings on Teacher Outcomes

As the above data demonstrate, SCBM schools have experienced some very positive teacher outcomes. There has been at least moderate growth in all five targeted change areas, and in three of those areas — self-efficacy and decision-making, collaboration and organizational commitment — major advances have been made. During interviews, teachers expressed general optimism and enthusiasm for SCBM and the possibilities it holds for bringing about school improvement. Although there are still changes that need to be made (particularly in the areas of parent involvement and support, the amount of time required of teachers to participate in SCBM activities, and the promotion of individual, rather than group, agendas at some council meetings), there was consensus among teachers that, as one explained, "We may have a ways to go, but we're so much better off [with SCBM] than we were without it."

MAJOR FINDINGS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

In theory, SCBM should ultimately benefit students by allowing a school to make those school improvements that will lead to enhanced student outcomes. While the primary focus of student outcomes tends to be quantifiable improvements in student academic achievement, other student outcomes sought by schools include improved attendance, behavior and attitudes toward school. These are important outcomes in themselves, but the theory of SCBM is that improvements in these areas will ultimately lead to improvements in student academic performance.

We utilized a number of data sources in evaluating the impact of SCBM on student outcomes. For quantitative data, we analyzed annual School Status and Improvement Reports which contain data on student attendance rates, student behavior (class A and B offenses), and Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) scores (by stanine groups) for third and sixth grade students in math and reading. State averages based on the benchmarks set in the report on the superintendent's evaluation (1994) were used for comparison. Qualitative data on student attendance, behavior, and attitudes toward school came from interviews with administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents and students. In addition, surveys of administrators, teachers and classified staff provided additional data about student achievement, behavior and attitudes. A question on the parent survey regarding parent perceptions of student attitudes toward school provided data on student attitudes toward school; in addition, many parents included comments about other student outcomes. Other qualitative evidence was derived from classroom observations, SCBM council meetings and other school activities we observed during site visits to the schools.

Findings Related to Student Academic Achievement

The quantitative data on student achievement, namely SAT scores, are not particularly conclusive. We analyzed 1992, 1993 and 1994 test scores for third and sixth grade students at each school to determine whether there had been changes in student test scores.[18] We determined the proportion of students in each school who had scores in the average or above average stanines of the test (stanines 4 through 9). While there were annual fluctuations in scores at many of the schools, we determined the degree and direction of change in student outcomes by subtracting the 1992 proportion from the 1994 proportion.[19] We also analyzed how the scores of students at the nine schools in our study compared with statewide averages in the years 1992 through 1994.

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[18] 1992 results were used as the baseline in this analysis because most schools had begun to operationalize the SCBM concept by this time. Moreover, 1992 marks the beginning of a new scoring method; SAT scores prior to 1992 are not comparable to scores in later years.

[19] Interestingly, at several of the schools, SAT scores were considerably higher during 1993 — the intermediary year for which we have comparable data — than 1992 and 1994. However, given the trend at most schools for scores to steadily increase or decrease over the three-year period, and our inability to account for score fluctuations, analyzing changes in two-point in time data covers the largest span of time (i.e., 1992 to 1994) and thus provides the most reliable picture of how test scores have changed over time.

Given the constraints of this data, it is difficult to make definitive statements about either the link between SCBM efforts and student achievement or the reliability of gauging changes based on two points in time (1992 and 1994) data. However, our analysis seems to identify some emerging trends in student achievement score data and suggests a relationship between a school's baseline SAT scores and whether student scores (measured in proportions of students testing in stanines 4 through 9) increased or decreased.

- ***Although there are some positive trends in student test scores, for the most part, the results are fairly mixed.***

An analysis of how the proportion of students testing average and above average (stanines 4 through 9) changed between 1992 and 1994 yields mixed results. While many schools showed improvement in some areas, others had declining grades during the same time period. Table 13 below shows a summary of the changes in SAT scores, categorized by grade and subject area.

Table 13
Summary of Findings of 1992 and 1994 SAT Score Data
(Stanines 4 - 9)

Third Grade Math Scores
- 6 of the 9 schools showed improved scores — 2 made large* gains
- 3 of the 9 schools showed worsened scores — no large declines

Third Grade Reading Scores
- 4 of the 9 schools showed improved scores — 3 made large gains
- 5 of the 9 schools showed worsened scores — 2 made large declines

Sixth Grade Math Scores**
- 4 of the 9 schools showed improved scores — 2 made large gains
- 5 of the 9 schools showed worsened scores — 3 made large declines

Sixth Grade Reading Scores
- 3 of the 9 schools showed improved scores — 2 made large gains
- 6 of the 9 schools showed worsened scores — 2 made large declines

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Table Notes:

* We define "large" gains or declines as those that reflect a change of nine percent or more between 1992 and 1994.

** While many schools showed declining scores for sixth graders, three of the nine schools showed increased math scores and five showed increased reading scores during 1993, before grades declined the following year.

It appears that SAT scores improved somewhat more at the third grade level than at the sixth grade level. Of the nine schools, eight showed improvement in one or both subjects among third graders, compared to five schools that showed improvement at the sixth grade level. As shown above, six of the nine schools had increased third grade math scores, while four of the schools had increased third grade reading scores. At the sixth grade level, four of the nine schools had increased math scores and three of the nine schools had increased reading scores.

Examined by subject area, all nine of the schools improved math scores in either the third or sixth grades; only one school improved math scores at both levels. In reading, four schools improved reading at the third or sixth grades; three of the four schools improved reading scores at both grade levels. On the other hand, six schools had declining scores in reading at either the third or sixth grade levels; four of these showed declines at both grade levels.

While our analysis of these data indicates some positive trends in student outcomes, they are generally mixed. This is not surprising; school improvement goals, implementation timelines, and school instructional emphases have been different for each of the nine schools. It is worth noting that sixth grade SAT scores show less stability than do third grade scores. For three of the schools, intermediary (1993) sixth grade math scores were higher than the scores for 1992 and 1994, and five of the schools had sixth grade reading scores that were higher during the intermediary year. While difficult to interpret, it indicates that SAT scores are in flux and may not be a reliable sole measure of student academic performance.

Research on school reform shows that some schools can be expected to experience an initial decline in student outcomes. As implementation stabilizes, student outcomes often improve. Moreover, there is no way to control our analysis to account for other variables — such as other instructional interventions, numbers of students taking the tests, and demographic changes in the student body — that could potentially affect standardized test scores. As stated above, there were several inexplicably high grades during 1993, which may indicate an upward trend in grades that has not been fully actualized. For example, in several of the schools, the percentage of students testing in the higher stanines jumped as much as 20 percent between 1992 and 1993, then fell again in 1994. This underscores our conclusion that there has probably been insufficient time in which to evidence marked changes in quantitative student outcome measures, especially on student test scores. For many schools, school improvement goals that would affect student achievement have not been fully implemented schoolwide.

- ***For the most part, schools with student test scores below the state average showed test score gains, while schools with student test scores above the state average showed some decline in scores.***

There is a pronounced pattern among schools that show SAT score increases and decreases: for the most part, test score gains tend to be made by those schools with scores that are lower than average, while test score declines tend to made by schools with higher than average test scores. The majority of cases (three of the four) in which there were large math score increases (nine percent or more gain between 1992 and 1994) were schools where 1992 math scores were below the state mean. In all of the cases (five of five) where there were large reading score increases, the schools were below the state mean in 1992.

Based on this analysis, SCBM appears to be related to bringing about student academic improvement at those schools that tend to have student scores below state averages on the SAT. Of the nine schools in our study, the three schools with the lowest percentage of students testing in the higher stanines made the greatest score gains between 1992 and 1994. All three increased reading scores for both third and sixth grade students. In addition, each school saw an increase in either third grade or sixth grade math scores (but not both).

Conversely, among the nine schools, those with the highest SAT scores had a greater tendency to have their scores slip between 1992 and 1994. Of the seven cases where there were large (nine percent or more) decreases in SAT scores, all but one school had above average SAT scores in 1992. In only one of the seven cases were 1994 scores significantly below the state average.

- ***An emphasis on improving student achievement and raising standardized test scores among schools with lower than average scores, on the one hand, and an emphasis on developing alternative assessments and de-emphasis on "teaching to the test" among schools with higher than average scores on the other, help explain the inverse relationship in test score trends.***

A likely reason for this trend is that those schools with lower than average scores tended to have goals of increasing achievement in these areas and put effort into raising SAT scores. For example, several schools among the nine had clearly articulated goals of increasing student achievement in the area of reading and language arts, probably because their previous achievement in this area tended to be quite low.

Among the several schools that have student bodies that consistently score very high on both SAT reading and math tests, more emphasis was placed on developing critical thinking skills among students and utilizing alternative assessments, thus de-emphasizing "teaching to the test." The apparent result is that SAT scores slipped from 1992 to 1994. As described below, school community members at these schools do not feel this is a cause for concern.

- ***Perceptions of student academic achievement in other areas — improvement in writing and critical thinking skills, for example — indicate more positive impacts of SCBM on students.***

Interviews with teachers, administrators and parents at all of the nine schools, including those at which there have been decreases in SAT scores, reveal that all of the schools perceive positive impacts of SCBM on student achievement. At many of the schools, administrators and teachers cited improvements in writing, critical thinking and math skills. Parents, in interviews and in written survey comments, for the most part, expressed confidence that their children were learning more. Teachers at most of the schools gave examples of how student learning outcomes were improving, including developing a better understanding of math concepts, increasing reading and writing volume and quality, and developing the ability to critique their own work.

"We wanted to teach students to be critical thinkers and they are. They challenge authority and expect to be consulted."

— Teacher

Several administrators and teachers, when confronted with slipping SAT scores, said they are not surprised (or concerned), given that they do not feel the SAT test is capable of assessing student mastery of content and critical thinking skills. In fact, at each school, administrators and teachers were confident their instructional and curricular improvements were, or would soon be, producing marked improvements in student learning outcomes. In many cases, as has been described in earlier sections, alternative assessments are in the development or early implementation stages.

Findings Related to Student Attendance, Behavior and Attitudes

- ***By and large, student attendance in these nine elementary schools is high and there were no discernible trends over the four-year period.***

The annual School Status and Improvement Reports for each school show student attendance and behavior data. For the most part, attendance rates tend to be high for students at all schools. Student daily attendance rates across the nine schools remained stable, in a range of between 90 to 99 percent; of the nine schools, the largest change in attendance rates between the 1987–88 and 1993–94 school years is approximately three percent in either direction. On average, attendance rates for these nine schools stayed within one percentage point of 94 percent, and no individual school dipped below 90 percent in any year since 1987.

While there were no significant changes in student attendance, for all nine schools anecdotal evidence from interviews with school community members, including administrators, teachers, classified staff and parents, pointed to consistent improvements in student attendance for all of the schools. Many noted that attendance was generally good, but improved with SCBM. Several schools noted a reduction in absenteeism and tardiness. Many parents, in interviews and in written survey comments, noted their children's increased eagerness to go to school.

- ***While the quantitative evidence is limited and inconclusive, anecdotal evidence suggests SCBM has promise for affecting changes in student behavior and, particularly, student attitudes.***

Quantitative measures of student behavioral data are only available for serious (class A and B) offenses, and no trends were apparent in this data. Since the nine schools in this study are elementary schools, it is not surprising that the number of Class A and B offenses is very low. However, anecdotal evidence from interviews with school staff and parents at all of the nine schools suggest that student behavior has improved considerably since the implementation of SCBM. Members of the school communities interviewed consistently agreed that student behavior has improved. School staff note, for instance, that there are fewer arguments and fights among students. Several principals noted a marked reduction in the number of students being sent to the principal's office for minor offenses. Parents commented that there is less name calling among students and that they treat their peers with more compassion and respect. Most, if not all, schools reported a significant improvement in student behavior.

- ***Nearly all schools report student attitudes toward school and learning have improved as a result of SCBM activities.***

One of the reasons for improved attitudes and behavior that was noted by many of the individuals and groups interviewed at almost every school is that student attitudes toward school and learning have improved with SCBM. School staff and parents described students who are increasingly positive about school and who have been enjoying the educational process much more than previously. Students themselves described school as being much more fun than before; at several schools, students now describe the learning process in the classroom as more activity-oriented, less boring, and more practical. At several schools, staff commented that students are internalizing values that are part of the schoolwide vision which, in turn, leads them to respect themselves and others more.

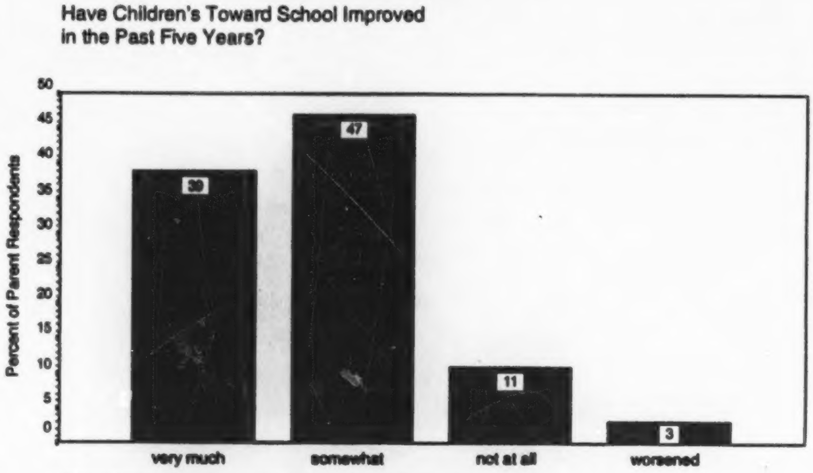
"SCBM means doing things and learning in a creative collaborative way. You learn more through this than if you learn out of a textbook because a textbook is very boring, and you don't pay much attention. The way you learn here isn't boring."

— Student

At many schools, teachers and other staff report a substantial gain in students' self-esteem due to the many ways the schools have become more student-centered, including students having a voice in school management, student opinions being listened to more, and instructional practices that bring students more into the process. In addition, many schools have instituted award ceremonies and similar mechanisms to recognize students' efforts and achievements. Those interviewed believe such activities are encouraging positive behavior and raising student self-esteem. Many parents, in their written comments on the parent survey, mentioned observing growing self-esteem in their children and other students.

Anecdotal evidence on improved student attitudes toward school was confirmed by results from the parent survey. Eighty-six percent of parents responding felt their children's attitudes toward school had improved in the past five years; of these, thirty-nine percent felt that their attitudes had improved "very much." Only three percent reported a worsening of their children's attitudes toward school, while 11 percent felt that their children's attitudes had not changed. Figure 6 shows how parents responded to the survey question about changes in their children's attitudes toward school. Many parents noted changes in student attitudes in their written comments. In describing their increased confidence in the school, many wrote comments about how their children enjoy school more than before, have improved attitudes about school, exhibit better behavior, and

Figure 6: Parent Perceptions of Changes in Their Children's Attitudes Toward School



Source: Far West Laboratory parent survey [n=1011 (342 no response)]

have increased self-esteem. Importantly, parents also described academic outcomes, as well as the sense that teachers are increasingly involved in improving the educational outcomes for their students.

- ***Students who participate in the SCBM decision-making process report a sense of empowerment; other role groups note the development of student leadership and communication skills as a result of SCBM participation.***

Interviews with school staff at most schools described the positive impact of students' involvement in the SCBM school decision-making process. Many noted that students have developed leadership and verbal skills and have benefited by experiencing the democratic process first hand. Others noted that students have gained a greater voice in their schools through SCBM and have learned that they can make a difference. Many students described the empowerment they feel from the results of their participation or from lobbying for changes. In most schools, staff described student empowerment and involvement as being important impacts of SCBM at their school.

Summary of Findings on Student Outcomes

As described above, there is consensus among school-community members interviewed and surveyed at each of the nine schools that

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SCBM has had positive impacts on students in a number of areas. Academically, students are making strides in various areas, including math, science, reading and writing skills. Moreover, at most schools, students are described as developing the abilities to think critically, set goals for their own learning and assess the quality of their work. Students, school staff and parents describe students who are empowered by being involved in decision-making and whose increased enjoyment of school has led to more positive attitudes toward school and learning, better behavior and improved attendance.

While the quantitative evidence does not appear to consistently mirror these findings, neither does it refute them. Records of student attendance, behavior and attitudes toward school are generally positive among the nine schools. In regard to SAT scores, while the results are mixed, it appears that for schools that have emphasized improving test scores, scores are in fact increasing. While it is probably still too early to see dramatic and consistent results, there are many indications that through SCBM students are developing attitudes and skills that will enable them to succeed both academically and socially in the future.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Since SCBM began in 1989, the first nine schools — the pioneers of SCBM — have made considerable progress in accomplishing the goals they set and charting new courses for school improvement. In contrast to the state context for educational reform just prior to SCBM's creation — characterized by a lack of risk-taking, particularly at the lower levels, within the system (Berman and Izu, 1988) — we find some schools actively confronting the inevitable tensions that arise in making significant change. Their successes and frustrations (and willingness to voice them) are indicators of the growth and change occurring within SCBM schools as they work with their communities to create new learning opportunities and support for Hawaii's youth. Findings from this study suggest a number of conclusions that, in turn, point to specific suggestions on how participants at all levels — school, district, state and community-at-large — can work together to support coherent improvement efforts aimed at creating exciting and challenging learning opportunities for all students.

CONCLUSIONS

- ***SCBM has made great strides; all school-communities have greater voice, many have learned to collaborate and work together in new ways, and a few have developed a school culture that supports significant improvement in the learning environment for students.***

From the experiences of these nine schools, it is clear that SCBM succeeded in bringing ***voice*** to many groups in the school-community — and particularly to those whose voices were previously absent in school decision-making. In this process, many school-communities also have learned to ***collaborate*** and better work together. By setting the stage for increased communication and mutual respect, providing schools with limited resources and allowing for flexibility to plan and learn new ways of "doing business," SCBM has enabled more teachers to work cooperatively with their colleagues and other members of the school-community, including parents. In a few places where we have seen significant departures from traditional practice, SCBM has helped the school-community develop a ***culture*** — the norms, values and vision — that supports school improvement. In short, SCBM rarely has *caused* school improvement, but it has provided the framework and vehicle for improvement.

- ***In the current context, and at this stage of development, continuing and sustaining the progress made in the areas of planning and decision-making are critical.***

Sustaining the decision-making processes that schools began under SCBM is a major issue for many schools. This is a crucial time because, in addition to the normal turnover in SCBM council membership that schools experience as a result of SCBM by-laws, there is generally high turnover in school administrators, as well as expected turnover in staff due to retirement incentives offered last year. Constant changes in SCBM council membership and fewer opportunities for training in skills like facilitative leadership mean that even schools that initially established inclusive decision-making processes will need to revisit the "ground rules" for shared decision-making with old and new members alike. As one administrator in a school where role groups work together reasonable well noted:

> *Every time we get new people on board, we spend a lot of time showing people how to make facilitative leadership work. It's really hard to tell new people and keep meetings to the time allotted without sacrificing relationships.*

Continuing with comprehensive planning and evaluation processes is also a challenge for schools. Many began their SCBM efforts with comprehensive planning processes involving a broad range of school and community participants, but have not yet established permanent structures or processes to facilitate planning and research. Likewise, few schools have developed the structures and routines to regularly monitor their progress or the indicators to know when their goals have been met.

- ***While substantial progress has been made, some adjustments are needed to make SCBM a stronger vehicle for school improvement.***

Though all schools set some improvement goals in curriculum and instruction, the connections between SCBM and school improvement often have been loose. Moreover, implementation within a school or even grade level often has been uneven. In the few schools that made substantial and coherent improvements, particularly in those that improved their curriculum and instruction, schools were able to integrate SCBM and school improvement with a pedagogical vision shared by all members the school-community — teachers, staff and parents as well as students.

But for many schools, school improvement plans have been documents required by districts rather than "living" documents that the larger school-community can easily understand. The plans for many schools have been too detailed or fragmented to provide a coherent picture of what schools are trying to accomplish, or they have been too cumbersome to convey to others.

In addition, schedules and resources often have made it difficult for schools to find the time to develop and monitor their plans for improvement.

- ***Increased resources and systemwide cooperation are needed to support continuing school-community success.***

Whether a specific program such as the Success Compact or a reform effort of the school's own design, SCBM can build school capacity as well as the support and resources necessary for school change. Revitalizing the commitment and spirit of those outside and inside the school can create a *community* learning environment — the larger network of opportunities and support that Hawaii's youth needs to flourish and grow.

But like youth, school-communities need support to continue to learn and develop appropriate strategies to better meet the needs of their children. Resources — in the form of time and money — are scarce. Yet, they are key to the ongoing professional development that teachers need to meet the new responsibilities associated with decision-making authority and curricular and instructional reform. They are also critical to the comprehensive planning and evaluation processes that are necessary to build support — and other resources — among parents and the community for these efforts.

Support in the form of greater school flexibility and autonomy is also needed to carry out these plans. Streamlining the waiver and exception process so that schools can more quickly and easily experiment with innovations on the one hand, and developing systems that hold schools accountable for results on the other, will create some of the support schools need. Shortening the length of time it takes to research and process waiver and exception requests is critical for maintaining momentum and enthusiasm as well as for altering schools' perceptions about limitations and constraints from the state. Valuable time the department staff spend on processing these requests could then be used to better support schools.

Finally, schools also need continued assistance during a time when resources are few in the state. This will require rethinking current ways of providing support and more cooperation systemwide.

- ***The experiences and context of these first nine schools may be different from other SCBM schools.***

Finally, in reviewing the findings and considering how they may apply to other schools in Hawaii, it is important to understand that the context for these pioneering SCBM schools is different from schools that may follow. First, as pioneers, these schools eagerly adopted SCBM, and their requests and actions have established precedents and eased the way for other schools that may want to embark on a similar course. Second, many of these schools had prior experience with site-based decision-making or had already begun to embark on a new direction in curriculum and instruction. Therefore, these schools' experience may be different, and caution needs to be exercised in generalizing these findings. For instance, it is likely that these schools experienced more frustration with the "state" than others because many had high expectations regarding autonomy and flexibility. But the early SCBM waiver and exception process and support were slow. It may also take schools who entered SCBM in later years longer to achieve similar changes, depending upon the conditions that were in place when these later schools began (for example, participatory decision-making, a strong vision and direction for curriculum and instruction).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our overall assessment, the following recommendations are offered to participants at different levels for supporting continuous and coherent improvement processes in school-communities.

1. ***All levels — the school, district, state and community at-large — need to consider ways to continue building group decision-making and communication skills.*** Though most role groups feel empowered by SCBM, many schools need continued training and support in decision-making skills. For instance, districts and the state need to continue offering training in facilitative leadership and consensus decision-making. Schools need to consider mechanisms for continued reinforcement and development of these skillls. For example, one school began each meeting with a review of the ground rules of participation and decision-making. Another school rotated the role of facilitator of the meeting.

2. ***Schools need to determine and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the council from the start.*** Clarifying expectations and revisiting the issue of areas of jurisdiction are critical given constant shifts in staff and communities. In many schools, input and influ-

ence are sufficient for most role groups; in others, authority and management are important to certain role groups or in certain areas. Schools need to determine and clarify these issues early — and be prepared to revisit the issue on a regular basis. Roles and responsibilities demand attention when there are changes in school administrators or significant shifts in staff or community.

3. Participants at all levels, but especially in schools, need to develop better procedures for orienting new SCBM council members — particularly staff and parents — to SCBM and the school's vision. Developing orientation procedures is one strategy for communicating SCBM roles and responsibilities to new members. Bylaws that allow for staggered terms instead of complete changes in council membership can be another way of ensuring continuity in the decision-making process and orienting members to new methods of working together. For schools that have made significant changes in the "way they do business," orientation procedures are especially critical because new parents and, especially, staff need to be brought up to speed quickly on SCBM and the school's vision for student learning.

4. The state needs to streamline and clarify the waiver and exception process. Several options can be considered; one is a blanket or rule-by-rule waiver approval allowing schools to automatically receive approval for requests previously granted to another school by the board. In practice, this could take the form of a simple posting or distribution of an information sheet on waivers and exceptions already approved, or the department could be given greater authority to approve similar school requests. Additional ways to streamline the process have been suggested in other reports (Berman and Stond, 1991). Any of these alternatives would decrease not only the time schools spend but the time department staff spend — valuable time that could be used supporting schools in other ways. Regardless of the specific means chosen to streamline the process, the outcome is key — providing a quicker turnaround so that momentum and enthusiasm for planned changes are not lost.

Sharing the criteria used to consider waivers and exceptions — and clearly explaining those criteria — might also streamline the process. At the same time it would positively alter perceptions on the part of school-communities of state constraints and limitations. Once schools have demonstrated their requests are consistent with school improvement priorities, providing them maximum flexibility will help them accomplish their goals more quickly.

5. Schools and the state should consider adopting accountability systems capable of meeting both school and state needs. While schools may need to design assessments that are better aligned with new curriculum and instruction directions, the state may also need a set of standard measures to gather the comparative data it needs for resource allocation and support decisions. Clearly, state administered performance-based assessment of all students would require a significant investment of time and resources. But other systems that would address needs at both levels should be considered. For example, a system that includes state-required as well as school-community-selected indicators of particular systemwide and school-specific goals would better serve the state and the local schools. The current School Assessment and Accountability Report being piloted in some schools is an example of an existing tool that could be slightly modified and expanded for these purposes.

In exchange for maximum flexibility, schools need to be held accountable for results. Therefore, they should develop methods of monitoring progress toward goals. The state can support schools by providing them with appropriate models, including, but not limited to, formative evaluation tools previously developed (and in use in some of these schools) by the department's evaluation section and Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory.

6. For stronger connections between SCBM and school improvement, all levels should consider streamlining school improvement goals, designing staff development plans and instituting a comprehensive planning process.

Streamline school improvement goals. By streamlining school improvement goals and plans, schools can not only target limited resources on a particular area, but better communicate and build support for their goals in the larger school-community. Identifying three to five improvement priorities should make it easier for schools to develop a pedagogical vision of improvement that can be communicated and shared by parents and students as well as staff. Some research on systemic reform suggests an in-depth focus on one or two areas over a period of years is often more effective than fragmenting resources to cover breadth (Carlos and Izu, 1995).

Design strategic staff development plans. Staff need time to develop new skills, and one-time workshops or even a year-long focus on a significant reform, such as integrated thematic curriculum and instruction, are insufficient. Schools should develop improvement plans that include strategic and focused staff development plans —

plans that include *sufficient time and resources for ongoing professional development activities that are tied to student learning needs.*

Develop a comprehensive planning process that includes all role groups in developing and monitoring school improvement plans. Schools should rely on mechanisms that allow inclusion of a broad range of participants in schoolwide planning. Participation should be on a more regular basis, not simply at the start of an effort. For example, one school holds an SCBM conference at the start of each year. A few schools hold annual retreats to reflect on the year's activities. These kinds of activities help build community support and keep the school's vision alive in the larger school-community.

7. ***Greater cooperation, coordination of effort and creative use of resources are needed to provide SCBM schools with the support they need in this time of diminishing resources.*** Different levels of the system need to work together and play different roles to support schools. For example, schools can take a leadership role in identifying major improvement priorities and strategies to monitor improvements; districts can take the lead by simplifying school improvement plan formats and creating ways to better integrate these with SCBM; technical assistance providers can help by clarifying areas of confusion, such as the difference between goals and missions; and the community-at-large can provide the schools with the resources — in time and in-kind contributions and financial resources — that local schools may need to further their efforts.

"SCBM puts decision-making in the hands of the people who really know the school, and the community, and the students. We know best what we need."

— Parent

Schools are resources, too. The state should explore networking possibilities for SCBM school-communities to share valuable lessons, skills and strategies with others who are beginning to implement SCBM or are in need of training. For instance, from the grassroots level, some schools are considering or already planning for SCBM at a complex level. Other technical assistance, such as the annual SCBM conference, might be structured to network schools with similar interests or challenges.

In short, SCBM shows promise for furthering school improvement; but the entire system — parents, community organizations and local businesses, as well as the department, board, unions and policymakers — will need to rethink and reinvent their roles and relationships with schools to further SCBM and systemic reform.

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